



Illuminations

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Life Strategies Newsletter

June, 2008

Keeping in Touch

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Our newsletter theme this month is "Career Management Doesn't Just Happen." Although happenstance or serendipity is widely recognized to influence most careers, intentional career management can minimize risks and maximize success and satisfaction. In fact, Planned Happenstance theory focuses on what individuals can do to prepare for, and take advantage of, unexpected events and opportunities.

Members of the Life Strategies team can certainly speak to the impact of happenstance on our own careers and the growth of the company. We have experienced unprecedented growth recently, and all of it has been due to unexpected opportunities. However, we've also been engaging in ongoing learning, research projects, and writing – our professional development activities and work opportunities are closely connected. Deirdre is researching the link between career management and employee engagement in her PhD studies – this has directly resulted in work with a nuclear facility in Texas. Roberta continues to be interested in global and international careers – not surprisingly, this has prepared her for our current project in China.

Similarly, by keeping our keynote and workshop presentations fresh, we have sparked the interest of those in our audiences – Deirdre's recent presentation on psychometric assessments to the BC Association of School Business Officials resulted in an immediate contract for support with employee selection; Roberta's presentation to a group of career practitioners in Calgary high schools resulted in an ongoing consulting contract within one particular school. One of our presentations about the recruitment and retention issues faced by today's employers resulted in the opportunity to write a "how to" guide for an employer's association and facilitate workshops across the province.

New projects keep us engaged in our work and also result in growth opportunities for the rest of the team. As Fiona and Cassie take on increasing responsibilities, Cheryl Thom has joined the team to provide them with support. We've added additional instructors to our Career Management Professional program to free up some of Deirdre's time – Joanne Elliott is the newest member of the CMP team.

Of course, part of intentional management is building in downtime! Cassie recently returned from two months in Asia and Fiona is heading off for a break in Mexico. Roberta and Gerry are adding some sightseeing days to their upcoming conferences in Washington, DC and Buenos Aires. Deirdre and her husband enjoyed some time at the lake before and after her recent presentation in Penticton.

As you reflect on your own careers...or the careers of your employees...what can you do to be more intentional about them? Is it time for a career check up? A career conversation with a manager or supervisor? From an organizational perspective, do you need to be more intentional about recruitment, screening, selection, engagement, retention, or succession planning? Is work-life balance an issue for you or your employees? How can you be more intentional about sustainability?

On another note, we hope that you'll take a few moments to complete our survey on advocacy (to access the survey visit <http://www.advancedsurvey.com/> and enter in survey number 62037 in the "Take A Survey" box on the right side of the screen. The final date to participate in this survey will be June 15, 2008). Roberta is speaking in Washington on the topic "That's Just Plain Silly: Channeling Outrage to Champion Change" and her brief article on the Ethics of Advocacy was recently selected as the feature article for the June issue of [Career Convergence](#). In many of our recent projects, the importance of advocacy and social justice has been a recurring theme. We're interested in your stories; together, we can make a significant difference in our world!

INTENTIONAL CAREER MANAGEMENT ACROSS A LIFETIME

Career Planning in High School

Intentional career management skills need to be taught. High schools in BC and Alberta all have career planning integrated within the high school curriculum. However, some high schools are going above and beyond! Roberta has recently had the privilege of working with the teachers at Centennial High School in Calgary, with their innovative “Careers by Design” program. What’s unique about this program is that every teacher in the high school works with a group of students over a three year period as they engage in self-reflection, explore opportunities, and develop a transition plan and career portfolio. Wouldn’t it be exciting if every student in Canada had an opportunity like this?

Employee Selection

Deirdre has been speaking and writing recently about the risks inherent in a “hire and hope” approach to employee selection. In the current economy defined by skills shortages, desperate employers are changing their approach to employee recruitment and selection. Some are lowering entry requirements in terms of specific skills and certificates, choosing to hire for attitude and provide in-house training and professional development. Others are reaching out to under-represented groups which include immigrants, aboriginals, and people with disabilities – a strategy that works well if existing employees are ready to embrace and accommodate diversity. Several of our clients have found that using psychometric assessments as part of a more intentional approach to employee screening can minimize risk when hiring employees with diverse backgrounds. See the case example (on page 3) from a BC school district for how they’ve successfully added testing to their employee screening toolkit.



Recruitment and Retention

The Community Service Employers Association (CSSEA) has taken a comprehensive approach to addressing recruitment and retention issues identified by their members. After presenting at their AGM last year, the Life Strategies team was approached to create a how-to guide to assist members to implement the suggestions generated from a comprehensive survey and reference group. Roberta has had the privilege of facilitating recruitment and retention workshops for CSSEA members in 12 cities around the province – despite regional diversity, there are obvious commonalities to the challenges of finding and keeping good employees in the current economy. What is your organization doing to address this important issue?

Organizational Career Management Initiatives

The Life Strategies team is currently supporting four different organizations (both public and private sector, and in the US as well as Canada) to launch career management programs for employees and managers. Services vary from lunch’n’learns, workshops, coaching, assessments, websites, and resource centres, but the theme is constant – organizations are increasingly recognizing their role in facilitating the career development of their employees. Career management is linked to employee engagement and retention; not surprisingly, it’s on the radar screen of many organizations in this challenging economy.



Retirement Careers?

Although many people think of retirement as leaving their career behind, for others retirement marks a time of new beginnings. Not all retired people have left the workforce – many retirees have become self-employed, started second (or third) careers, or have joined a family business. Others have returned to their previous employers on contract – as consultants or to support specific projects. Retirement in the new millennium takes many forms, often mixing work with leisure and other significant life roles. To address the realities of this new group of retirees, Personality Dimensions has produced a new assessment tool, Retirement Dimensions. Roberta and Fiona were part of the development team; pilot-testing is underway and this exciting new product should be available to Personality Dimensions trainers within the next couple of months.



VICTORIA SCHOOL DISTRICT CASE STUDY

Client Name: School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) **Sector:** Public (K-12) Education

Client Overview: The Greater Victoria School District serves approximately 19,000 students in 28 elementary schools, ten middle schools, eight secondary schools, two alternate schools, a continuing education program, and a thriving international program for high school students. The district is located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island with Victoria being British Columbia's capital city. The district includes the communities of Victoria, Saanich, Esquimalt, and Oak Bay. The district's mission statement is: The Greater Victoria School District is committed to each student's success in learning within a responsive and safe environment. (Source: <http://www.educationcanada.com/browse.phtml?sid=bc&eid=898&a=eip>)

The district offers full and part time employment for both support staff and teachers (approximately 3000 in total) with ongoing turnover predicted in the next five years. Senior management will experience a retirement rate similar to other public and private sectors throughout North America.

Assessments being utilized:

- Two tests are used for support positions (i.e., Custodians, Educational Assistants, Clerical)
- An employee screening assessment that measures items such as accuracy and productivity. This test can also indicate the likelihood of commitment level, job satisfaction, and promotability
- A test of personality characteristics which measures items such as extraversion, agreeableness, independence, and conscientiousness
- Other positions (i.e., IT) have also utilized a test for critical thinking that measures items such as evaluation of arguments, interpretations, and inferences

How the tests are helping:

Kim Trace, Human Resource Officer, for the Greater Victoria School District says:

The testing process has helped school district management in selecting the best candidates from the pool. The profiles have enabled the team to recognize the strengths of each individual and provide support and some training options where it is deemed to be most beneficial. The leadership skills assessment has been especially useful as it allowed us to target specific issues during the interview process and during reference checks. As a layperson I have been impressed with the professional and ethical approach that the Life Strategies' team uses throughout the assessment process, from how they guided us in selecting tools that would meet our needs and then supported the management team to interpret the results, providing us with a deeper understanding of each candidate we have considered.

CAREER MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

Upcoming Fall Courses Include:

- Researching Workplace Trends, Career Information, and Employment Possibilities - September 10, 2008
- Career Development Foundations, Emerging Theories and Models - September 17, 2008
- Ethics for Career Practitioners - September 24, 2008
- Administering and Interpreting Career Assessments - October 1, 2008
- Helping Skills to Facilitate Career Development - October 8, 2008
- Work Search Essentials 1: Resumes, Cover Letters, and Career Portfolios - October 15, 2008
- Career Coaching Skills - October 22, 2008

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to our recent Career Management Professional Program graduates:

Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF): Jacqueline Watkins

Rehabilitation Specialist Certificate: Sue Dorey

Personal and Professional Development / Life Skills Coach Certificate:
Tamara Newell and Sherry Bragg

CMPP ORIENTATION

Life Strategies Ltd. has designed an Orientation site for new and prospective students. The CMPP Orientation will give those new to the online learning experience the opportunity to meet CMP instructors and support staff as well as to see how our system works and how our program operates.

The Orientation begins June 16, 2008

Register now by emailing studentadvisor@lifestrategies.ca

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT	WHEN	FOR WHOM	REGISTRATION DETAILS
CMPP Orientation	June 16, 2008	Prospective and new CMPP students	Register by emailing studentadvisor@lifestrategies.ca Cost - Free
Survivability Coach and Workshop Leader Training	Sept. 24, 2008 Online	HR Professionals Career Practitioners Teachers / Counsellors	Coach & Leader Training - \$1001.35 + GST Coach Training - \$898.42 + GST / Leader Training - \$911.50 + GST For details, visit http://lifestrategies.ca/training.cfm
CPE 510 & 521	CPE 510 Oct. 15, 2008 CPE 521 Nov. 12, 2008 Online	CPE 521 = Students with an undergraduate degree and CPE 510 (or a similar course)	CPE 510 - \$695.00 + GST CPE 521 - \$1,250.00 + GST For details, visit http://lifestrategies.ca/training.cfm
Scaling Up: Early/Mid Career Transitions	October 18, 2008 SFU	Recent Graduates Employees in Transition	\$75.00 + GST For details visit http://www.sfu.ca/cstudies/mpprog/scaling-up.htm
Blueprint for Life/Work Designs Orientation	Oct. 22, 2008 Online	HR Professionals Career Practitioners Teachers / Counsellors	Materials on CD-ROM - \$179.00 + GST Printed Materials - \$189.00 + GST For details, visit http://lifestrategies.ca/training.cfm
Scaling Down: Late Career Transitions and Early Retirement	October 25, 2008 SFU	Potential Retirees Individuals experiencing a late career transition	\$75.00 + GST For details visit http://www.sfu.ca/cstudies/mpprog/scaling-down.htm
PD Bridging Online Workshop	Nov. 19 - Nov. 25, 2008	True Colors © Facilitators MBTI © Qualified Users	\$299.00 + GST For details, visit the Life Strategies Online Store
PD Level 1 Online Training	Nov. 19 - Dec. 9, 2008	HR Professionals Career Practitioners Teachers / Counsellors	\$795.00 + GST For details, visit the Life Strategies Online Store
NATCON 2009	January 19 - 21, 2009 Toronto	Individuals in the Career Development field	For details, visit http://www.conferenceboard.ca/conf/jan08/natcon/
Career Management Professional Program	Courses start every Wed. beginning in Sept. - Online	HR Professionals Career Practitioners Teachers / Counsellors	\$329.00 + GST 10% discount when registering for 3 CMPP courses at once For details, visit http://lifestrategies.ca/training.cfm
ENET Educational Society Training Days	First Wed. of every month	HR Professionals Career Practitioners Teachers / Counsellors	\$20.00 - Including Tax - Members \$40.00 - Including Tax - Non-Members For details, visit www.enetsociety.com



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ABOUT LIFE STRATEGIES

Life Strategies specializes in career management and leadership development services for individuals and organizations, psychometric assessment services, training, and e-learning initiatives. We provide professional development and train-the-trainer sessions for human resources professionals, career practitioners, career management professionals, and counsellors. In all our work we strive to build capacity within individuals and organizations through consultation, facilitation, coaching, and training.

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