

BUSINESS VOICE

HALIFAX'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE

Halifax Chamber
welcomes
Cynthia Dorrington
as Chair of the Board

MAKING HISTORY

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SAFE WORKSPACES

Help for employers addressing sexual harassment **Pg 28**

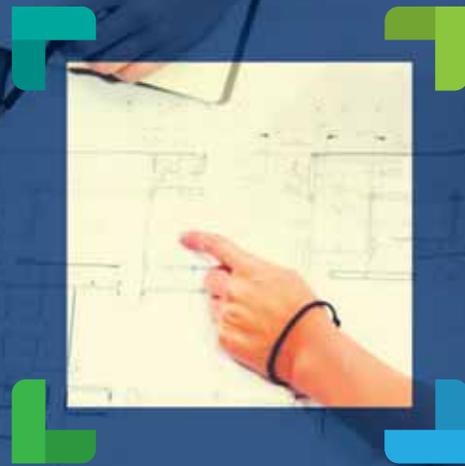
CULTIVATING HAPPINESS

Gratitude at work increases productivity **Pg 32**

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Workshop inspires and challenges **Pg 34**

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*The Chamber is not just for mainstream organizations. 18
The door is open for all."*

Cynthia Dorrington, Chair of the Board, Halifax Chamber of Commerce.

COVER STORY:

MAKING HISTORY

Halifax Chamber welcomes
Cynthia Dorrington
as Chair of the Board



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CHAMBER EVENTS

For a full and up-to-date list of our Chamber events, please visit www.halifaxchamber.com/events

2019 HALIFAX BUSINESS AWARDS NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN!

We will be accepting nominations until Tuesday, September 4th.
Nominate a deserving business today!

ANNUAL Spring Dinner

DATE: Wednesday, May 2
TIME: 5 - 9 pm
LOCATION:

Halifax Convention Centre
PRESENTING SPONSOR:
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Outcomes over Optics
SPEAKER: **Duncan Sinclair,**
Chair of Deloitte Canada
DATE: Wednesday, May 9
TIME: 11:30 am - 1:30 pm
LOCATION: The Westin Hotel
SPONSOR: **Deloitte**

SPEAKER: **The Honourable Karen Casey,**
Minister of Finance & Treasury Board
DATE: Tuesday, May 15
TIME: 11:30 am - 1:30 pm
LOCATION: The Westin Hotel
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Dr. Robert Summerby-Murray
DATE: Thursday, May 24
TIME: 11:30 am - 1:30 pm
SPONSOR: **Saint Mary's University**

BUSINESS After Hours

HOSTS: **Seapoint at Harbour Isle**
DATE: Thursday, May 10
TIME: 4:30 - 6:30 pm
LOCATION:
50 Marketplace Drive, Dartmouth

Business Development Network

DATE: Friday, May 18
TIME: 12 - 1:30 pm
LOCATION:
Halifax Chamber of Commerce

CHAMBER 101

DATE: Wednesday, May 16
TIMES: 12 - 1 pm
LOCATION:
Halifax Chamber of Commerce



DATE: Wednesday, May 23
TIME: 12 - 1:30 pm
LOCATION: Halifax Chamber of Commerce



DATE: Thursday, June 14, 2018
TIME: 11 am - 8 pm
LOCATION: Brightwood Golf & Country Club

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New Chair and a fresh strategic plan

Help us welcome our new Chair of the Board

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PATRICK SULLIVAN
PRESIDENT & CEO

Historically, the May issue of *Business Voice* is when we proudly introduce our new Chair of the Board. This issue gives you a chance to get to know them better and what they're hoping to accomplish in their time as Chair. This year, we are excited to welcome Cynthia Dorrington, President of Vale & Associates as our Chair of the Board, who will be supported by Margaret Chapman, Vice President of Corporate Research Associates Inc. as Vice Chair. For those of you who don't know Cynthia, you can find out more about her in this issue — and learn that we are so happy to have her in this role. She has been on our Board of Directors for a number of years as a Board Member, Chair of HR and Governance — she is also finishing her term as Chair of the Black Business Initiative (BBI) as she heads into this leadership role as Chair of the Halifax Chamber.

Her year as Chair will include an extensive amount of planning and shifting. We've been working away at our 2013–2018 Strategic Plan and will be ready to launch our next plan later this year and I couldn't think of a better person to lead the charge. Cynthia is a leader, she is an agent of change and she is capable. Launching a new Strategic Plan takes tenacity, dedication and hard work. Once the planning is done, the Chamber will need to shift our mindset from what we now do and begin to align with the new plan to reach our goals. We're excited for



Mike Dembeck

“ We've been working away at our 2013–2018 Strategic Plan and will be ready to launch our next plan later this year and I couldn't think of a better person to lead the charge. Cynthia is a leader, She is an agent of change and she is capable.”

the opportunity and I am sure Chamber members will be too.

While we are moving towards our new Strategic Plan, it might beg the question of whether it's time to review your organization's plan. Some questions we could all stand to ask ourselves include:

- Who are you as an organization?
- Do you have a purpose that aligns with what you're focused on?
- Where do you see your organization in five years and will your current plan get you there?

It's important to take the time to focus on the business to ensure effectiveness. It's easy to get lost in the day to day busy work and lose sight of why you're working so hard in the first place. Taking

time to regroup and refocus keeps your organization relevant and lengthens your lifecycle. We understand your contribution to our city and we want you to be successful, regardless of what success looks like to your organization. We're here to support you. And if you're looking for more extensive assistance in strategy development, I encourage you to check out our member directory. You have peers within the Chamber membership that can help you get there. You don't have to go it alone.

Once you've taken a look at your own strategy, I encourage you to look up for a few minutes and take the opportunity to meet Cynthia and the Chamber team at one of our Chamber events. I hope to see you there. ■

NEW & NOTED

We welcome our new Chamber members

ACADA - ATLANTIC CANADA AEROSPACE AND DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

ACADA is a collaborative SME-focused organization representing the interests of the aerospace, defense and security industries in Atlantic Canada. ACADA is comprised of more than 165 industry members and organizations across Atlantic Canada.

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Here is what a cure for cancer could look like.



This is a zebrafish, he hails from the foothills of the Himalayas. And, while quite small, he is mighty. You see, zebrafish like this are being used on a daily basis by Dr. Jason Berman and his team to learn how cancers, and other genetic diseases develop and grow, and how they could respond to possible treatments. Making this little minnow, a very big fish, indeed.

This study, and others like it, are proudly supported by the Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation.

[watch the video at DMRF.ca](http://DMRF.ca)

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To submit your 50-word description for New & Noted, login to your Chamber Master profile, or email Kayla Whalen, Administrative Assistant at kayla@halifaxchamber.com or 902-468-7111 within the first six months of membership.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

How our members are growing Halifax



CYSTIC FIBROSIS CANADA WELCOMES NEW DARTMOUTH WALK CHAIR

We are delighted to welcome Christina Brien as the 2018 Dartmouth Walk to Make Cystic Fibrosis History Chair. Christina has been volunteering with **Cystic Fibrosis Canada** in both Halifax and Toronto for the past five years. She is proud to walk for everyone impacted by CF, but especially for her nephew, Blake. Christina is also a member of Blake's Believers, one of Atlantic Canada's top fundraising teams and says: "I encourage everyone to walk with us at one of our 11 Atlantic Canadian locations and help us end CF." If you are interested in joining Christina, visit www.cysticfibrosis.ca/walk.



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This innovative new program puts smart tablets in the hands of Northwood's respite clients. **Northwood** staff are also using the tablets as a tool to mentor CCA students from local colleges on the value of person-centred care. Funding for the project came in the form of a grant from Telus. "We are always looking for ways to add value to the services we offer," says Janet Simm, President and CEO of Northwood. "We know respite is a service that's truly beneficial, but we wanted to explore how we could make it more meaningful, more stimulating and ultimately more enjoyable for each client."

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NOVA SCOTIA SIGNATURE RESORTS WELCOMES NEW SALES MANAGER

Digby Pines and **Liscombe Lodge** are pleased to announce Emily Richards has joined their team as Sales Manager. Emily will focus on helping groups plan their offsite events. Building on her marketing and events experience, Emily is looking forward to working with local and regional organizations to make their events memorable. “I understand the importance of details when it comes to event planning and execution. I look forward to using my experience and creativity to help clients realize their event goals.” The best way to reach Emily is through email, at emily.richards@signatureresorts.com.

SCREEN NOVA SCOTIA

SCREEN NOVA SCOTIA WELCOMES LAURA MACKENZIE AS INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Laura Mackenzie has been chosen as Interim Executive Director of **Screen Nova Scotia** by its Board of Directors. She replaces Erika Beatty, who completed a successful two-year contract with the organization in March 2018. “Laura brings with her a vast network of international contacts developed through her years at Strategic Partners Co-production Market and recent work with the Canadian Media Producers Association,” says Mike Volpe, Chair of the Board. “Our goal is to generate production work in Nova Scotia and Laura is uniquely positioned to help us achieve that goal.”



CAMP TREASURE CHEST: FORGING FRIENDSHIPS, GROWING CONFIDENCE AND CREATING MEMORIES

The **Lung Association of Nova Scotia** is proud to offer kids with asthma the opportunity to participate in a summer camp adventure that they could not normally experience. Camp Treasure Chest provides kids living with asthma access to trained medical staff who offer support and guidance for managing their asthma effectively, while enjoying all the perks of a traditional summer camp. For more information, visit ns.lung.ca.

COMFORT FOAM CELEBRATES 25 YEARS



Comfort Foam is excited to announce that 2018 is their 25th year in business. Comfort Foam started in 1993 to distribute foam and upholstery supplies to the local upholstery shops throughout Atlantic Canada. Fast-forward 25 years and not only do they continue to supply foam to the upholstery trade, but also to the marine and RV industries, as well as to correctional centres, hospitals, nursing homes and many other industries. In 2018, Comfort Foam will be supplying the hospitality industry with mattresses and replacement sofa cushions. They are thrilled to continue making life more comfortable for everyone.



GERRY MILLS RETIRES, ISANS WELCOMES NEW CEO JENNIFER WATTS

Executive Director Gerry Mills has retired after leading **ISANS** for 30 years. With her deep experience and expertise, Gerry made a vital contribution to immigrant settlement in Nova Scotia and Canada. We thank Gerry for her genuine caring, dedication and collaborative spirit. We are pleased to announce that Jennifer Watts became CEO on April 1, 2018. Jennifer, a former municipal councillor, joined ISANS as Director of Settlement and Integration in 2016. She looks forward to building on ISANS’ strengths as well as working with newcomers and partners to create a more welcoming and inclusive province.



MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION WELCOMES NEW TEAM MEMBER

The **Mental Health Foundation** is happy to share that Mike Brannen has come aboard as our new Communications Coordinator. Mike is a graduate of both SMU and NSCC, completing an Advanced Diploma in Public Relations in 2016. Mike brings with him a passion for writing, events and social media. He is looking forward to working with the foundation team to raise awareness and tell the stories of the one-in-five Nova Scotians living with mental illness. Together we can change the way people think.



I. H. MATHERS

I. H. MATHERS AMALGAMATES THREE DIVISIONS

I. H. Mathers recently amalgamated three of its divisions (Atlantic Custom Brokers, Mathers Freight and Mathers Logistics) into Mathers Logistics Ltd. The organization will provide expert, cost-effective marine agency, offshore logistics, cargo handling and warehousing, freight forwarding, customs brokerage and immigration services to domestic and international clients. “The decision to amalgamate came from our ongoing pursuit of effective and efficient operations and our commitment to providing our clients with enhanced services,” says Brian Lane, CEO. For more details, visit www.ihmathers.com.



RENOVATION UPDATE FOR THE HAMPTON INN & SUITES - DARTMOUTH CROSSING

Hampton Inn & Suites - Dartmouth Crossing has recently completed renovations to its 163-room property. The two-month, \$4 million renovation project, led by New Castle Hotels & Resorts and Southwest Properties, includes a refresh of all of the guest rooms, meeting spaces and

public areas. “Hampton by Hilton hotels has a rich history in providing guests with accommodations that are multi-functional, modern, convenient and comfortable,” says Rick Norman, General Manager. For more information or to make reservations, please visit dartmouthhampton.com.

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KAREN FURNEAUX LAUNCHES HER FIRST BOOK

Karen Furneaux, President of **iPromise Performance Inc.**, launched her first book on International Women’s Day at the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame. *Strong Beauty: Power Up the Champion Within* is packed full of practices, strategies and tools, whether you’re leading your team or leading your life. Furneaux shares her Olympic journey and defining moments along her path. The book is inspiring and easy-to-implement into your life — and is available on amazon.ca.



LUNCH MADE EASY

Ensuring you have healthy lunch options just became easier. **Pete’s Frootique & Fine Foods** is helping you skip the line with their new app. Lunchtime can be a rush, so they are offering online ordering. Just click, pay and pick up. You can even order for the whole office! Skip the drive-thru or those microwaveable meals and choose from their award-winning salads and sandwiches. For more information on meals made easy, visit petes.ca/on-the-go.

ONE number SOLUTION™

BLACK STAR GROUP WELCOMES JULIE CARSON

Black Star Group would like to welcome Julie Carson of Fredericton, New Brunswick, to the One Number Solution™ network. Julie has completed her onboarding and is ready to change her client’s lives through holistic financial planning. She is accepting new clients and specializes in families and young professionals. She can be reached at julie@cdfsfinancial.ca. We are accepting applications from advisors who would like to add the One Number Solution™ process to their practice and have room for an additional five advisors in the program this quarter. To find out more, visit www.onenumberolutions.com/apply.



PAYFORMANCEPOS RECEIVES FIRSDATA CANADA’S TOP PARTNER AWARD

Members of **PayformancePOS** were in Toronto recently to accept FirstData Canada’s Top Partner award for 2017. This is the second year in a row that PayformancePOS was recognized against 170 other agents across Canada. Brian Green, President of FirstData Canada presented Ryan O’Leary, President of PayformancePOS and Marco Antico, Vice President of FirstData Canada, with the award.



DOCCHRISTINE SUCCESSFULLY REBRANDS

DocChristine is celebrating a successful rebranding. The new name and logo represents that DocChristine is balancing science and nature to guide their clients back to health. Dr. Christine Sauer is a German-trained conventional as well as naturopathic physician, dermatologist and allergist, working in Halifax as a Certified Ultimate Performance Health Coach. She offers her services to individuals and companies, online and in person. For more information, visit www.DocChristine.com.

MARITIME TRAVEL NAMED PLATINUM CLUB WINNER OF CANADA’S BEST MANAGED COMPANIES PROGRAM

Maritime Travel has been recognized nationally for excellence in business performance for 2017. The Halifax-based travel company has been named a Platinum Club winner of Canada’s Best Managed Companies. “We owe our continued success in achieving this award to the dedication of our branch teams across the country. Our knowledgeable, caring staff on the front lines, together with state-of-the-art technology and operations, has been instrumental in achieving this designation for so many years,” says Gary Gaudry, President of Maritime Travel.



JUNKERY FIRST JUNK REMOVAL COMPANY IN CANADA TO CHOOSE GREEN FUEL

Bullfrog Power is proud to announce that **Junkery** is the first junk removal company in Canada to choose green fuel for its company. “Junkery is reducing its dependence on fossil fuels and helping transition Canada to renewable energy sources,” says Anthony Santilli, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Bullfrog. “Sorting, recycling and donating junk has resulted diverting more than 85 per cent of materials we collect from landfill,” says Ginny Sterling Boddie, co-founder at Junkery. “Supporting green fuel for a portion of our fleet is a new and innovative way for us to take our commitment to the environment to the next level.”

A NEW DIRECTION
FOR CANADA'S BANK NOTES



TEN DOLLAR BANK NOTE FEATURING VIOLA DESMOND UNVEILED IN HALIFAX

On March 8, the **Bank of Canada** unveiled the new \$10 bill featuring a portrait of Viola Desmond. It is the first regularly circulating bank note to feature a Canadian woman as a portrait subject and the first vertically oriented note issued by the bank. This note acknowledges the past and the continuing efforts towards achieving rights and social justice for all Canadians. It will enter circulation in late 2018. Visit www.bankofcanada.ca/vertical10 to explore the note's security features and design (including a map of Halifax) and to watch Wanda Robson's reaction to seeing the note.



DRESS FOR SUCCESS TEAMS UP AGAIN

Dress for Success Halifax celebrates International Women's Day in and with style. “The national partnership with RBC Wealth Management and Talbots is making a significant difference in the lives of the women we serve in HRM and we are grateful for their contributions,” says Julie Wisen, Board President. The

team from RBC Wealth Management worked for a half-day with DFSH to improve their working space. Executive Director, Brenda Saunders/Todd, spent a half-day with the Talbots team to serve Talbots customers and express appreciation for their clothing and financial campaign.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Submit your 100 word write-up and picture at www.halifaxchamber.com/businessvoice

*deadline is six weeks from publication date.

BUSINESS VOICE

HALIFAX'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE



BIDE AWHILE ANIMAL SHELTER DONATES 2,000 CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Bide Awhile Animal Shelter has recently purchased 2,000 copies of *The Happy Tale of Two Cats* and *The Lucky Tale of Two Dogs*, by Cathy M. Rosenthal, for donation to children across the province. This is an important education initiative, as the books explain the role of animal shelters

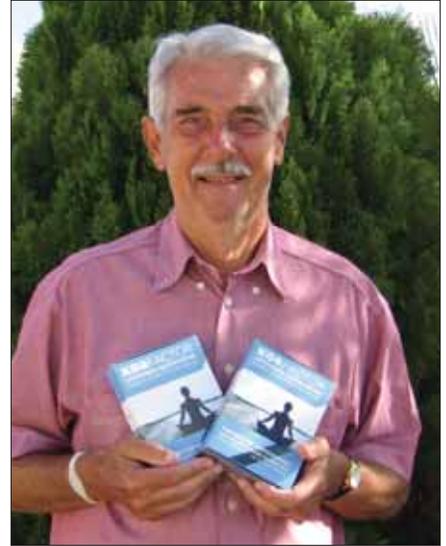
and teach the next generation what it means to be a responsible pet guardian. Recipients include the Halifax Public Libraries, the Halifax Regional School Board, Sparks, the Boys & Girls Club, early childhood learning centres and visitors of Chapters, the Discovery Centre and local shopping malls.



BENEFITS OF MAINTENANCE-FREE LIVING

In today's society, we all have busy schedules and sometimes it's hard to fit it all in, which is why the team at **Forest Lakes** has introduced a new way for their residents to live their lives maintenance-free. From housekeeping to snow removal,

from dog walking to home repairs, you can select and build a package to suit you and your family's needs. To learn more about how you can benefit from maintenance-free living, call a Forest Lakes representative today, at 902-482-1394.



HEALTHWIZE WELLNESS CENTRE PREVENTING GLUTATHIONE DEFICIENCY

HEALTHWIZE Wellness Centre now offers, KORFactor™ glutathione, "Master Antioxidant." Nearly every degenerative disease we know can often be traced back to chronic inflammation, which long-term can be devastating. Glutathione helps fight infections, free radicals, prevent cellular and DNA damage and helps recover faster from injuries. It's also a "natural detoxifier." Natural glutathione levels decline starting in the mid-20s, so supplementation is important for optimal health. The special processing makes it "highly absorbable." Maintaining optimal glutathione stores is essential for upholding a healthy heart, mind and immune system. For more information please contact Wendell at 902-443-2946, or e-mail healthwize@ns.sympatico.ca.

PRECISION BIOLOGIC PRESENTS NEW APPROACH TO IMPROVE INHIBITOR TESTING FOR HEMOPHILIA A

Precision BioLogic, in collaboration with Roche and Genentech (a member of the Roche Group) unveiled data from the study of a new kit for a Modified Nijmegen-Bethesda Assay (MNBA), at the Thrombosis & Hemostasis Societies of North America (THSNA) 2018 summit in San Diego. Recognizing the need to standardize and improve Factor VIII (FVIII) inhibitor testing for people with hemophilia A, the companies collaborated on the development of the new MNBA kit and the recent study. Full details are available at www.precisionbiologic.com.

A.P. REID INSURANCE STORES LAUNCHES NEW CUSTOMER PORTAL

A.P. Reid Insurance Stores, a leading national insurance brokerage, is excited to announce the launch of their new, user-friendly online customer portal and mobile app, branded the “A.P. Reid Client Access Centre.” The technology offers customers quick and easy access to their policy information, when and where ever they need it. Created with the customer experience in mind, A.P. Reid Client Access Centre uses the latest technology, with improved navigation and functionality, to ensure that visitors are provided an optimal experience. Clients can access the platform across all digital devices through www.apreid.com, or by downloading the A.P. Reid Insurance app.

CUT STEAKHOUSE RECEIVES FOUR DIAMOND AAA/CAA AWARD

CUT Steakhouse, a member of the **RCR Hospitality Group**, has once again been awarded the prestigious AAA/CAA

Four Diamond award. CUT is one of only three restaurants in Nova Scotia awarded this distinction. CUT has successfully been awarded the Four Diamond award every year, from 2008 to 2018, under General Manager and Sommelier Melissa Carey. “We are honoured and humbled to receive a Four Diamond rating for 2018. It is a rarity for a steakhouse to achieve this standing and it is a testament to the hard work, dedication and meticulous attention to detail over the past decade by our entire team.”

MONK RENOVATIONS COMMITTED TO BEING A LEADER IN THE RENOVATION INDUSTRY

MONK Renovations was honoured by the Canadian Home Builder Association — Nova Scotia, with the prestigious Koltech Peak award as Renovator of the Year for 2018. This is MONK’s second time being awarded this honour as they were also winners in 2016. Working continually to raise the bar in the residential renovation industry, Dan Monk serves on several industry boards and

committees dedicated to improvements in safety, training, licensing, ethics and business development for all renovators and their staff. The company motto is “Trusted – Professional.” Dan and his crews work hard every day to ensure they live up to it.

HALIFAX STANFIELD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT RATED AMONG BEST AIRPORTS IN THE WORLD

Halifax Stanfield has once again been rated by passengers as one of the best airports in the world. Airports Council International (ACI) World announced the winners of the 2017 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) awards and Halifax tied for the third-place ranking in the Best Airport by Region (more than two million passengers per year) category. ASQ awards are presented to airports whose passengers have rated them the highest over the course of a year, based on their demonstrated commitment to providing an excellent customer experience. The award will be presented in Halifax this coming September, at the global summit.

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NOVA SCOTIA

MAKING HISTORY

Halifax Chamber welcomes Cynthia Dorrington as Chair of the Board

By Erin Elaine Casey



Photos: Mike Dembeck

Cynthia Dorrington has a goal: to build a more diverse and inclusive business community — and a Chamber that reflects that community. She believes we must speak our goals out loud to create accountability to ourselves and others.

“If I can build bridges and provide avenues for intersections to occur and discussions to take place and make this a Chamber that is worthy of our entire business community, that to me is the ultimate success,” she says. “That’s an audacious goal, but we have to say it.”

Dorrington took over as Chair of the Board of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce in April. As the first African Nova Scotian to hold the position, she knows

expectations are high. She’s been preparing for this moment since she joined the Board in 2014, serving first as chair of the HR and Governance Committee, and then as Vice Chair of the Board. Taking over as Chair was an easy decision, she explains, “Because I believe in helping business grow, stimulating the economy and I have a unique perspective as the representative of a diverse business. The Chamber is not just for mainstream organizations. The door is open for all.”

Born and raised in New Glasgow, Dorrington is one of six children. Her father, Francis, was the first African Nova Scotian to sit on New Glasgow’s Town Council. Elected in 1976, he remained on

Council for 21 years, several of them as Deputy Mayor. “He stepped outside the norm,” she says, “and my parents always supported us in fulfilling our dreams.”

Family remains important to Dorrington. With her husband, Wayne, she has three stepchildren living all over Canada: in Halifax, Saskatoon and Yellowknife. She became a proud first-time grandmother in November 2017 and is now planning a trip to Saskatoon to meet the new addition.

She is also in business with her sister, Cassandra Dorrington. Together, they own and operate Vale & Associates. Established in 2004, Vale is a boutique consulting firm specializing in strategic



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— **Cynthia Dorrington**, President, Vale & Associates, Chair of the Board, Halifax Chamber of Commerce

management, business consulting and contractual HR services to organizations around the world, including Canada, the United States, the Caribbean, Central America and the continent of Africa. The company is named after Vale Road, the New Glasgow neighbourhood the Dorringtons grew up in.

As President of Vale & Associates, Dorrington consults with small- to medium-sized organizations across various industry sectors. She specializes in helping companies experiencing challenges with mergers and acquisitions, business growth, culture change and succession planning. She works in organizational and people strategy, diversity and inclusion,

change management, governance, organizational assessments, supplier diversity, performance management, project management, HR advisory, training and development and team building. She brings all these skills and more to her new role at the Chamber.

Dorrington’s path to self-employment wasn’t exactly typical. After graduating from high school, she moved to Halifax and found work in the high-tech telecommunications sector, where she stayed for about 20 years. While she was employed at MT&T, specialized retraining was offered to just 25 employees. Dorrington was chosen from hundreds of applicants to go through the customized program to augment the corporation’s IT division.

“In the beginning, not one of us knew IT,” she jokes. “After completion of the program I entered the IT division

and oversaw various programs and then migrated into the role of a system administrator, which was a non-traditional role at the time. There were very few women in that field.” She was involved in Y2K upgrades, but in 2001 Dorrington was downsized along with a whole group of people. She moved to an international call centre as a system support manager. Coincidentally, in 2004 Dorrington and her sister Cassandra were downsized at around the same time. The two of them agreed to start a business, run it for a year and see how it went. “We enjoyed ourselves so much in year-one that we decided to go into year two. Vale is still in business and we work all over the world!” Dorrington now holds both CPA and CMA designations and has been running Vale & Associates for 14 years.

Being the first African Nova Scotian



“Making this move for my community is a big deal, because this is the oldest Chamber in North America. But it’s also a coming of age, because African Nova Scotians have been in Nova Scotia for over 400 years. I see this as monumental not only for the Chamber but for my community.”

— **Cynthia Dorrington**, President, Vale & Associates,
Chair of the Board, Halifax Chamber of Commerce

Chair of the Halifax Chamber is both exciting and a little overwhelming for Dorrington. “You know, history is going to be made, but at the same time, it’s the unknown. The unknown can be daunting. Ultimately, I am who I am — and I will do what I can to make sure the mandate, mission and vision of the Chamber are achieved,” she says. And she is keenly aware of how important her new position is to the African Nova Scotian community. “Making this move for my community is a big deal, because this is the oldest Chamber in North America. But it’s also a coming of age, because African Nova Scotians have been in Nova Scotia for over 400 years. I see this as monumental not only for the Chamber but for my community.”

So far, the feedback from her community has been very positive, according to Dorrington. “How do we build and strengthen our diverse membership? A lot of Chamber members are not from diverse communities,” she explains. “A lot of people are now saying, ‘Wow! I need to learn more about the Chamber.’ It’s about time.”

Dorrington is no stranger to community building, and has worked hard for years to bring diversity to the corridors of power. In addition to her role at the Chamber, she is Chair of the Board for the Black Business Initiative (BBI), Chair of HR and Governance for the Africville Heritage Trust, and Chair of Governance for Hospice Halifax. Previously, she chaired the Governance Committee of the Board of the Greater Halifax Partnership, was President of the Halifax Cornwallis Chapter of the Canadian Progress Club, a member of the Police Chief’s Diversity Advisory Committee, and volunteered for 16 years with the Telephone Pioneers, to name just a few of her volunteer activities.

Having an African Nova Scotian woman at the helm of the Chamber is an important development for black, immigrant and other professionals who might not feel adequately represented in the public life of this city. “What we’re going to see is change. Having somebody like me at the helm is an opportunity to promote diversity, but at the same time

we must come together and say what we need going forward,” Dorrington says.

“We need to have voices at the right tables, those decision-making tables and it’s important for my community to be there. I might wear a business hat and have that in common with most of our membership, but I do think differently and I’ve had different experiences as an African Nova Scotian and also as a woman. I don’t resonate just as a woman in business. I’m a black woman in business and there are other issues that go along with that.”

Many friends and relatives have provided guidance and support to Dorrington along the way. “At the end of the day, you have to have your supporters and the people in your corner — having your touch points and the people you can sit down and talk to is very important.”

She wants to give a special shout out to Rustum Southwell, CEO of the BBI. “He has really guided me, helped me to achieve and made me the person I am today,” she says. She had always done volunteer work and Southwell encouraged her to apply for the first merged Board of the Halifax Partnership. “I sat on that board for seven years and it was so much fun and I learned a lot about myself and about being a Board member. Rustum was on the Nominating Committee for the Halifax Chamber, and he put my name forward for the Chamber Board. When [past chair] Rob Batherson asked me to Chair the HR and Governance Committee a couple of years later, I said sure! Without Rustum, the Chamber might not have someone from the African Nova Scotian community on the Board today.”

When asked what she’s most looking forward to during her time as Chair, Dorrington laughs. “My biggest goal is making it through the year! It’s going to be a fast year and I’m going to work very closely with my team at the Chamber. There’s no I in team.”

Her first and foremost objective is ensuring the Chamber is reflecting the many different entrepreneurs, organizations and institutions that make up Halifax’s business landscape. “I want to make sure the Chamber is reflective of all our potential clients. One important area is the not-for-profit sector, which is greatly needed but often overlooked. I really want to focus on how the Chamber works with them — how can we advocate for them and make sure they’re promoted?”



Patrick Sullivan, President and CEO of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, is pleased to welcome Cynthia Dorrington as the new Chair of the Board. She begins her tenure in May, 2018.

It's always hard to find sponsorships and funding — and the public doesn't always understand what they do." She points out that charitable organizations usually don't have the same opportunities for marketing and promotion that for-profit enterprises do. She hopes to promote strategic partnerships. "All sectors are needed in our business community. Sometimes we don't consider the challenges faced by not-for-profits, and they're the ones who struggle the most."

With her sights set firmly on diversifying the Chamber membership, looking for ways to promote strategic partnerships between different organizations and representing her African Nova Scotian community, Dorrington is excited to get started on her year as Halifax Chamber Chair. Her key message is one of co-operation, inclusion and openness to new ideas, people and ways of doing things.

"I want to set the stage for others to follow and allow them to realize there's nothing to fear. We're all talking the same language and we all have the same dream. We all dream. We all dream of being successful, and that's different for different people — let us all dream collectively together, no matter what success means to us." ■

CHAMBER GOLF CHALLENGE

Brightwood Golf & Country Club
227 School Street | Dartmouth

Thursday, June 14
12:00 pm - 8:00 pm

To register visit www.halifaxchamber.com
Sponsorship Opportunities Available!
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HALIFAX
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Cathy Yeulet/123RF

Keeping up with the millennials

Is your HR team riding the wave of change? **By Jon Tattrie**

Last year, a popular Chrome extension automatically replaced “millennials” in headlines with “snake people.” It led to altered gems such as, “Navy seeks to adapt training for snake people;” “Snake people: you will not be quite so special in the ‘futr’;” and “Snake people most likely to fall for online scams.”

Ali Breen, a Career Coach for snake people — sorry, for millennials — says workers in their 20s and 30s are used to stereotypes. Savvy human resource departments read beyond the headlines.

“Stop listening to the noise about how millennials are entitled, or millennials are coddled. A lot of that is very negative. Really, at the end of the day, wouldn’t it be great if everyone —

millennials or not — was engaged and excited to work where they were working and felt they were delivering meaning every day when they showed up nine-to-five?” she asks.

And it’s not about funky chairs, ping-pong tables and a Wii in the lunchroom. Breen worked in human resources before starting her own business to consult with millennials and with those who wish to hire them. She sees what works when recruiting young workers.

When she sits down with a millennial selecting a career path, she uses a narrative approach. “You help people mine their stories and experiences in order to power up to move forward. We do a lot of reflective work before we take

next steps. A lot of young people just go for what’s posted, or what they’ve already done, instead of going for what they really value.”

“Value” is the key word in understanding what millennials seek in work. “Most millennials feel like they are part of a bigger picture,” she says. Breen uses the example of a company looking to hire a carrot-chopper. If you wind up chopping carrots just to chop carrots, it won’t feel meaningful. But if you chop carrots because you’re working at the Dartmouth North Community Centre and it’s helping people live healthier, that’s meaningful. Or if you’re chopping carrots at a restaurant that always sources local foods, that’s meaningful. “I’m happy to



AnnieSpratt/Unsplash



Joe Robichaud, Tanglewood Studio

“On the whole, young colleagues are hungry, they’re capable and they crave learning opportunities like no other generation. True success for our younger colleagues is a balance of personal health and happiness with contributions at work.”

— **Scott Coleman**, Co-Owner, Atlantic Managing Partner, Optimum Talent

take the approach they used to win customers and apply it to recruit and retain younger workers. “It’s more than the pool table in the lounge or social beverages at three o’clock on a Friday,” he says.

Younger workers tend to respond well to being coached, rather than managed. HR departments might find more success with monthly catch-ups compared to reviews every six-months. Little problems can be addressed quickly and engaged workers will do a better job. Some younger workers want to rise to the top swiftly, while others seek untraditional career paths including lateral movements and temporary spells in different departments. Culture trumps cash for retaining younger workers. Perhaps that means working untraditional hours, or in untraditional workspaces.

“On the whole, young colleagues are hungry, they’re capable and they crave learning opportunities like no other generation,” he says. “True success for our younger colleagues is a balance of personal health and happiness with contributions at work.”

Coleman says younger workers value collaboration and were raised to ask questions. They might stop asking in a workplace where boomers and gen-Xers don’t ask questions, or don’t like to be



Tim Gouw/Unsplash



Joe Robichaud, Tanglewood Studio

“Millennials, from what I see, value collaboration, team work, social justice and enterprise — companies that are really putting their money where their mouth is in giving back and making the world a better place.”

— Wendy Vrooman,
Partner, Sandler Training

asked questions. That can lead to alienation, a sense their work isn't meaningful and fresh vacancies in the company.

Wendy Vrooman says older generations are moved by money, titles and success. “It’s been the norm that with long work hours, you throw yourself into your career to get to a certain stage,” she says. “Millennials, from what I see, value collaboration, team work, social justice and enterprise — companies that are really putting their money where their mouth is in giving back and making the world a better place.”

Vrooman is a Partner at Sandler Training. They help companies grow their revenues by analyzing the organizational charts around sales, learning

the company's strategy and studying HR deployment and HR skills gaps. She routinely meets millennials who want to grow personally and professionally. Successful HR departments tie those goals together to benefit the company and the employee.

She gives a recent example where a young woman wasn't bringing in enough sales through cold calls. Cold-calling seemed unconnected to her personal growth. But she did want to travel and do mission work. When she came to see cold-calling as valuable because the more success she had, the more money she could bank to take a travel break, her sales increased. She was no longer just “chopping carrots” — she was chopping

carrots to help herself help others through mission work.

For an older generation, the idea of working hard at a job to leave it might make no sense. But it makes sense to millennials. The job they'll do in 15 years doesn't exist today, meaning few people expect the job they land in their 20s to be there in their 40s.

“They're coming up and taking care of the world,” Vrooman says. “If we don't get on board with that sooner rather than later, how are we preparing and coaching them to be the drivers not only of economy, but I think more importantly to them, of social justice and social enterprise? It's incumbent on us to adapt to them to help them be successful.” ■

Solving the human resource puzzle

The new reality of staffing businesses and organizations **By Joey Fitzpatrick**

“ You may have a very happy and productive workforce, but if your standard practices are in violation of the law, you could find yourself in big trouble. I can help employers identify those issues and figure out ways to mitigate them.”

— Sarah Mullins, Founder and Owner, uptreeHR



Sarah Mullins,
founder and owner
of uptreeHR.

Contributed

Attracting and retaining top employees has always been an essential element of business success. That task is made even more varied and complex with the arrival of millennials in the workforce. This generation, born roughly between 1983 and 2000, comes to the workplace with its own set of expectations and values. Rather than stability and a long-term

job, millennials tend to value flexibility, meaningful work and upward mobility. They are not content to work 10 years at a menial job before getting the chance for advancement.

Helping companies adapt to this new reality is part of the job for Sarah Mullins, owner and founder of uptreeHR, a company she launched two years ago to assist clients in every area of human resources.

“I love working with companies that have flexible workplaces and progressive practices and helping them get there,” Mullins says. “The workplace is evolving and the successful companies will be the ones who can evolve with it.”

While providing meaningful work and competitive wages, employers must also adhere to provincial labour standards and human rights legislation. Employers need to be aware of prohibited grounds of discrimination, such as gender identity and sexual orientation. They also need to understand an employer’s duty to accommodate employees with special needs. Termination is an especially delicate area, which if not handled properly can leave an employer exposed to litigation.

With two decades experience in HR, Mullins can help clients put in place the necessary structure and procedures and raise red flags when she sees potential problems on the horizon.

“You may have a very happy and productive workforce, but if your standard practices are in violation of the law, you could find yourself in big trouble,” she points out. “I can help employers identify those issues and figure out ways to mitigate them.”

uptreeHR also provides hiring support

services, helping companies through the job posting and interview processes. This area can also be a minefield if an employer has not kept pace with evolving human rights law. For example, it is illegal to base a hiring decision on whether an applicant has children or is married.

One of her areas of expertise is with immigrant entrepreneurs. While these new Canadians may have sharp business acumen and ambition, they are often unfamiliar with Nova Scotia’s labour laws in areas such as minimum wage and maternity leave.

uptreeHR works with clients of all sizes and in a wide range of business sectors, including retail, manufacturing, technology and agriculture. Clients on monthly retainers receive support for their entire HR function, including everything from policy and performance management to employee relations and payroll.

“For those clients I would typically become a senior advisor on the management team and attend their operations meetings.”

Professional development plays an ever-increasing role in maximizing employee potential and performance. At the same time, technology has freed the HR function from much of the paper pushing, allowing it to play a much more strategic role within an organization. By taking a long term view, uptreeHR helps clients understand the impact that HR has on a company’s bottom line.

“It’s a mistake to see HR as just a cost-centre,” Mullins says. “With the right expertise, it can be incredibly strategic and significantly impact the performance of a business.”

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Day 5: Beijing

Bus excursion to the **Great Wall**, the 4,000 mile long and 2,000 year old construction is said to be the only man-made structure visible by the naked eye from the moon. Visit the **Ming Tombs**. One of the 13 Ming Emperors' Tombs is fully excavated and open for exploration.

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Day 8: Suzhou/Hangzhou

Morning tour bus excursion to **Hangzhou** for a visit to the **Economic Development Zone** and the centuries-old **Lingyin Temple**, featuring a 64.3 foot high camphor-wood carving of Buddha.

Day 9: Hangzhou/Shanghai

Morning boat cruise on **West Lake** with relaxing stopover at jewellike pagodas and tea houses. Afternoon tour bus trip to Shanghai.

Day 10: Shanghai

Visit the **Yu Garden**, a maze of marvelous pavilions, ponds, rocky works and overarching trees. Also visit the **Bund**, Shanghai's famous waterfront park. Tour the **Pudong Economic Development Zone**.

Day 11: Shanghai/Beijing/YYZ

Free time in the morning. The afternoon flight will depart by 1:30pm for YYZ where you will arrive at 10:30am on the same day.

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Making workspaces safe places

Help for Nova Scotia employers addressing sexual harassment **By The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission**

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission has introduced new online resources to help employers address and prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. Through its Safe Spaces Make Great Workplaces campaign, it is providing a short, free, online course for employers and their employees, along with a template for a sexual harassment policy, which can be adapted by organizations.

The Commission has recently seen a significant rise in the number of calls concerning sexual harassment, including from employers asking for advice and training. “We think it’s important that Nova Scotia employers have the tools to address sexual harassment head-on and prevent it,” says Christine Hanson, CEO of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.

Forty-three per cent of women in Canada say they have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace — victims often experience harassment repeatedly. The Nova Scotia Human Rights Act prohibits sexual harassment and organizations and institutions in Nova Scotia have a legal duty to take steps to prevent and address it.

Harassment can take place where there is a power imbalance between employees, but it is not limited to taking place amongst co-workers. It can also occur with individuals not directly employed by an organization, such as contractors, consultants and even customers. It can occur anywhere that an employee represents their organization, including sales calls, client dinners and trade shows. The costs can be high in terms of the physical and emotional impacts on victims.

Organizations that do not take steps to prevent harassment can face major costs in decreased productivity, low morale, absenteeism and potential legal expenses. Not dealing with matters properly could also negatively impact an organization’s reputation and customer loyalty.



Launch of Safe Spaces Make Great Workplaces on March 8, 2018. From left to right - Jim Cormier, Retail of Council of Canada; Christine Hanson, Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission; Kate Allen, Canadian Federation of Independent Business; and Gordon Stewart, Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia.



“Addressing and preventing sexual harassment in the workplace starts with employers having a clear sexual harassment policy, educating staff and enforcing the policy,” says Hanson. “Organizations must have a plan to deal with sexual harassment promptly and efficiently.”

The resources have already received the support of the business community, including the Retail Council of Canada, the Canadian Federation of Independent

Business and the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia. A public launch of the Safe Spaces Make Great Workplaces Campaign took place on March 8, International Women’s Day in Halifax.

To access the online resources, visit www.safespacesns.ca. Businesses may also feel free to contact the Commission at 1-877-269-7699 for advice and guidance.

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Enhancing diversity

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Five unconscious biases to watch out for in your hiring process



ANDREA FORBES-HURLEY
MBA, CPHR, PARTNER,
KNIGHTSBRIDGE
ROBERTSON SURRETTE

Cultivating a diverse workforce is important and this notion is supported by economic trends and research. With many Atlantic Canadian regions experiencing population decline and the impact of the “brain drain,” as newly minted graduates head west, the topic of enhancing diversity within our organizations has moved to the forefront of talent management conversations.

Demographic challenges aside, research in recent years has clearly demonstrated that diversity has a direct impact on the bottom line. McKinsey & Company

reviewed 366 public companies across an array of industries in Canada, Latin America, the United Kingdom and the United States and found that companies in the top 25 per cent for racial and ethnic diversity are 35 per cent more likely to yield financial results above their national industry medians. Also, companies in the top 25 per cent for gender diversity are 15 per cent more likely to yield financial results above their national industry medians. These statistics are not new revelations. As an executive search professional, I often hear from leaders who agree that enhancing diversity is a top priority. So why aren't we seeing more diverse organizations?

Most organizations are fishing in the same pools, following the same processes, asking the same questions and hoping for a different outcome. In order to create more diversity within our organizations we need to take a careful look at the unconscious biases that are often inadvertently built into hiring processes. Everyone involved in the hiring process needs to challenge assumptions and ask often uncomfortable questions: Are we picking the “best” candidates because the other members of the hiring panel liked them best? Is it because a candidate

looks the part? Or because a candidate comes from an organization we respect? Or because we really connected with the person based on some shared experience? All of these reasons are biases that commonly creep into hiring decisions and work against efforts to enhance diversity. Here are five unconscious biases to watch out for:

CONFORMITY BIAS

“Groupthink” is a common phenomenon in hiring processes. A well-known study by Solomon Ashe highlighted the tendency for people to be swayed by the opinions of others when participants were asked to rate the length of a line compared to a sample of three other lines. Although the difference in sizes was clear, if participants were told their peers had chosen the incorrect answer, more than 75 per cent also chose the incorrect answer at least once out of 12 trials.

If you have ever been a part of a hiring panel, you have seen the impact the majority opinion can have on others. Panelists may go along with the group because it is easier or because the group response causes them to question the validity of their own opinion. This is particularly true

when organizational leaders sit amongst the majority. This phenomenon can lead groups to overplay the strengths of the candidate the majority favours and underplay the strengths of other candidates.

HALO EFFECT

Do you ever find yourself immediately drawn to a candidate because they work at a company or with an individual that you think highly of? The halo effect occurs when we see one positive aspect about a person and we let the halo “glow” of this association affect our perspectives of everything else about that person.

Reactions such as, “He worked for her, so he must be good” or “That company did big things that year, so she must be talented,” inadvertently give credit where it may not be due. As a result, the candidate with the positive association will have an immediate advantage in the hiring process over those outside a hiring manager’s known networks.

BEAUTY BIAS

Research has shown that people who are rated more physically attractive are immediately perceived to be happier and more successful. The tendency to correlate attractiveness with the likelihood of individual success can have a direct impact in hiring decisions. Have you ever heard someone suggest a tall, athletic looking CEO really “looks that part?” In Malcolm Gladwell’s book *Blink*, he reveals that 58 per cent of the CEOs of Fortune 500 companies are over six-feet tall despite the fact that only 14.5 per cent of the population of American men are over six-feet tall. Not surprisingly, studies suggest men’s attractiveness ratings increase with height.

Further to this point, what we believe to be attractive is influenced by our individual sociocultural backgrounds. So, if we return to the example of height, while unconscious biases may favour tall male leaders, statistics suggest that North Americans are on average taller than individuals from many other countries, which may further disadvantage underrepresented groups.

AFFINITY BIAS

The affinity bias occurs when we are drawn to someone we have something in common with (i.e.: you attended the same university, you grew up in the same community or you have a mutual connection). In Atlantic Canada, we might call this the “who’s your father” bias.

In a small community where it is easy to draw connections through family, friends or professional relationships, this can easily feel like a great way to build rapport with a candidate. We have a natural tendency to want to be around people we can relate to. However, decision makers may unknowingly disadvantage candidates without connections in our region by applying this bias. Hiring managers may choose the candidate with whom they found a strong affinity, because they walked away from the interview feeling positively about the encounter, without truly evaluating if the candidate brought the best skills and experience to the table.

SIMILARITY BIAS

Closely related to the affinity bias is the similarity bias which involves the natural tendency to want to work with people who are like us. Studies have shown that similarity is one of the most significant factors influencing the attraction to candidates during assessment and leads hiring managers to be inclined to “hire in their own image.” Unfortunately, this bias can perpetuate homogenous organizations of employees that look,

sound and act alike.

If your organization is truly committed to enhancing diversity, those involved in recruitment and talent management must take deliberate action to change the status quo: Proactively identify organizations, sites and individuals connected to diverse communities to build awareness of career opportunities. Engage others involved in the hiring process in a frank discussion about the importance of diversity and revisit that priority at each stage of the hiring process, to keep it top of mind. Question initial reactions to dismiss the application of a potentially qualified candidate from an underrepresented group and educate teams on the cultural nuances that may influence candidate behaviours during an interview. Build a culture of inclusivity within your organization by starting a dialogue about diversity and unconscious biases. Challenge your own assumptions and encourage others to do the same, reevaluate hiring strategies and processes and monitor the success of these strategies.

Change in workforce diversity will not happen without change in the way organizations hire and promote.

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Remarkable, but is it even possible? Show gratitude for doing their job? Well, if it is useful in life, chances are it will be beneficial at the workplace.

Did you know that appreciating your team can affect employee engagement, performance, help reach goals, encourage job satisfaction and innovation? Leaders often overlook gratitude because it is so simple. Research confirms appreciation is the single most effective factor in enhancing workplace productivity. In 2012, Stanford Business Magazine reported gratitude can increase productivity between 25 and 66 per cent. It's the gift that keeps on giving!

Emergenetics International reported that by implementing gratitude into company culture, employees are more willing to spread their positive feelings with others, whether helping with projects, taking time to recognize those who have gone the extra mile — it's the mentality of "we're in this together."

Dr. Robert A. Emmons of the University of California and Dr. Michael E. McCullough of the University of Miami, found after only four months writing gratitude journals, participants were more optimistic, inspired, enthusiastic, attentive and experienced superior meaningful culture. Surprisingly, they also exercised more and had fewer visits to physicians than those who focused on sources of aggravation.

Lea Waters, Psychologist at the University of Melbourne describes



Gratitude Deficit Disorder (GDD) as an organizational phenomenon, referring to workplace culture. A culture of gratitude positively affects people — even when we don't necessarily feel appreciation, but we are in midst of a culture of gratitude. According to American Bureau of Labour in the U.S., 64 per cent of employees leave their jobs because they feel under-valued and unappreciated.

According to a survey of 2,000 Americans released 2013, by the John Templeton Foundation:

- People are less likely to feel or express gratitude at work than anywhere else
- Ninety-three per cent agreed, grateful bosses are more likely to succeed
- Most reported, hearing "thank you" felt good and motivated them
- Almost all respondents reported saying "thank you" to colleagues makes them feel happier and more fulfilled
- Thirty-five per cent believed expressing any gratitude could lead coworkers to take advantage of them

National Institutes of Health (Zahn et al, 2009) found high overall gratitude produced high-levels of activity in the hypothalamus, which controls eating, drinking and sleeping — with a huge influence on stress levels. Gratitude improved sleep, decreased depression and participants had fewer aches and pains.

FIVE WAYS TO CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF GRATITUDE:

- As manager, highlight what is working rather than what is not
- Speak highly of colleagues especially when not present
- Be the colleague you want to work with
- Write "thank you" in different languages
- Thank those who may not get thanked

Make it a challenge to be appreciative and grateful. Don't worry — your team, co-workers or your boss won't take advantage of you when you show gratitude at the workplace. You might even be surprised with the results. Managers who say "thank you" to their team may find their employees feel motivated to work harder.

Gratitude is important for building workplace trust and a positive corporate culture. Many effective leaders have switched to appreciation to help manage or avoid unnecessary stress. The results of employing gratitude as a strategy are surprisingly beneficial. Introducing a culture of gratitude builds trust and enables productivity to soar!

Floria Aghdamimehr, specializes in leadership and building trust for positive workplace culture to intensify productivity.

2017 Member Satisfaction Survey

HALIFAX
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The Halifax Chamber received 175 respondents for the 2017 survey.

WHAT MATTERS TO BUSINESS

CHAMPION COMMON
SENSE REGULATIONS
78%



ASSIST & PROMOTE
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
69%



REDUCE THE TAX
BURDEN
63%



97%

of Members would
recommend joining
the Halifax Chamber
*up from 94% in 2016

87%



OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH
THE HALIFAX CHAMBER

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WHY BUSINESSES JOIN THE CHAMBER

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Network & develop
business contacts



63%

Establish a profile in
the business
community



43%

Support local
business initiatives

65%

of respondents
have 25
employees
or less

1/3

of Members
use the Group
Health plan

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INSURANCE



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Unapologetically owning our ambition

Wonder Women Workshop inspires and challenges **By Erin Elaine Casey**

If I took one message away from the Chamber’s Wonder Women Workshop on March 2, it’s this: Stop apologizing for being awesome.

Maybe I should back up. In the past few weeks, I’ve had several meetings with women starting new businesses and I’m seeing a pattern. A lot of us — not all, but a LOT — feel like impostors. As if we’re here in this professional space by accident or dumb luck, not because we have the chops to make things happen. Like we always have something to prove, even when we’ve already arrived.

I was so struck by this apologetic attitude during a recent coffee date with an aspiring woman entrepreneur that I felt compelled to look into her eyes and say, “You are NOT a fraud.”

Or, as women’s leadership expert Eleanor Beaton put it in her keynote address at the workshop, “Unapologetically owning our ambition is a courageous act of everyday feminism.”

Every single speaker and panellist who took the stage on that sunny Friday morning shared some version of the very same message. Speaker Wendy Brookhouse, founder and Chief Strategist at Black Star Group, urged us to deeply examine our relationship with money and “step into our power” by making a plan to take control of our financial health. What panel member Leah Rimmer, Partner at



From left to right: Eleanor Beaton, Andrea Janzen, Charlene Boyce, Cynthia Dorrington, Wendy Brookhouse, Margaret Chapman and Leah Rimmer.

the law firm BoyneClarke, wants most is for women to feel free to be themselves and define success and leadership for ourselves without justification or apology. Panel member Andrea Janzen, Professional Coach, reminds us to step up and share real stories about the challenges women face, so we can put fuel in our tanks instead of judging ourselves and each other so harshly.

There were more than 130 women in the room that day, and almost everyone

I talked to relates to what Beaton calls the “Barbie complex” — the compulsion to be perfect and do everything perfectly. It comes in many forms, from “playing small” in business (because we’re so afraid to make a mistake) to the constant pressure to be “gracious” (because we’re so afraid people will think we’re not nice).

Mount Saint Vincent University undergraduates Jasmine Schreiner and Cassie Pilon, told me they already feel enormous pressure to compete and be “better” than the men they go to school with. “Men are treated differently, get more opportunities and are paid more than us for the exact same work,” Schreiner says. “If we’re not perfect, it’s like we’re letting the team down.”

Pilon agrees: “You have to be perfect at home and perfect at work. You’re afraid of falling off that pedestal.”

What’s the answer? It’s simple, but it’s not easy. We have to get over the idea that working our butts off and striving for a flawless performance is the path to success — that nice women don’t want professional power and that ambition, whether you’re pushing for success in



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“We want to lead by example by engaging all members of our diverse business community and that involves an inclusive strategy for our events, volunteer positions and leaders.”

— Becky Davison, Marketing Director, Halifax Chamber of Commerce

your \$20,000 microbusiness or your multi-million-dollar enterprise, is a dirty word.

Wendy Brookhouse has it right when she says, “Power is a good thing.”

One way to normalize what it takes to be a powerful woman — including what Beaton calls “episodic selfishness” — is to share narratives about what power and ambition look like in real life. On March 2, we heard those narratives and saw those powerful women in action. And guess what? They’re not so different from the rest of us.

Fun fact: 12 of the 15 staff members at the Halifax Chamber are women, as are the incoming Chair of the Board and Vice Chair and they are a powerhouse bunch. On the eve of International Women’s Day, hosting an event celebrating women and the important role they play in the business community, just made sense.

“We wanted to let the women’s business community know that we support them,” says Becky Davison, Marketing Director for the Halifax Chamber of Commerce. “We want to lead by example by engaging all members of our diverse business community and that involves an inclusive strategy for our events, volunteer positions and leaders. This will definitely be an annual event!”

Cynthia Dorrington, President of Vale & Associates, took over as Chamber Chair in April. I feel like her words are — if you’ll forgive me — *perfect* for this particular moment: “When you articulate a goal, you have to think it through and also speak it out loud. We typically don’t go back on what we say. We never want to look like we failed or relinquished our goals. When you articulate a goal or mission or vision, you will strive to achieve it.”

And so, here is my own vision,

inspired by all the amazing and courageous women who spoke with me at the Wonder Women Workshop:

- Trust yourself
- Be imperfect
- Tell real stories — your own and others’
- Celebrate your ambition
- Define your success

The Wonder Women Workshop was sponsored by Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary’s University, BoyneClarke, Rogers, BMO and Theriault Financial.



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A seaside challenge for golf

Chester club offers scenery and high-level golfing **By David Pretty**

If golf is experiencing any sort of decline in popularity, Dave MacMillan, General Manager of Chester Golf Club, isn't seeing much first-hand evidence.

"We have a vibrant membership every year," he says with a hint of pride. "Our dues are low when compared to other clubs that don't have our resources."

This is particularly impressive when you consider the site's many amenities, including club rentals, power carts, on-site practice facilities and well-appointed locker rooms with showers. Competitive group rates and a fully-equipped boardroom make Chester Golf Club a particularly popular choice for charity events and corporate outings.

While features like this are certainly convenient, MacMillan knows that it really comes down to course quality and the surrounding environments.

"We're very fortunate with our location here," he admits.

The area's natural beauty and the club's unique and challenging course have been attracting golf enthusiasts since 1955. With several renowned architects having a hand in its evolution, the 6,100-yard, 18-hole, par-70 course takes players through a charming maze of seaside vistas and forest-lined fairways.

"The greens and the precarious winds are the course's greatest defence," he enthuses. "The back nine in particular offers a gratifying series of ball striker's holes that can really make or break your round."

At the apex of the course, players must contend with unpredictable coastal winds. The final hole skirts seaside before guiding players back to the clubhouse. After an intense golf

game, players will relish the opportunity to enjoy a top-notch lunch served by friendly staff.

"Our clubhouse is a very popular local dining destination," MacMillan adds. "We're particularly well-known for our seafood and our chowder is some of the best around."

While enjoying their refreshments, visitors will marvel at the breath-taking scenery.

"First time visitors to Mahone Bay are always blown away," MacMillan says. "It's 'Canada's ocean playground' in one gorgeous vista."

For these reasons and many more, Dave MacMillan is notably optimistic.

"I'm excited for the future. We've got a great plan in action here at Chester Golf Club. We work hard and we still consider ourselves to be at the apex of the golf scene here in Nova Scotia."

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Chester offers visitors the magic of a classic golf course in a seaside setting. The course routing provides a golfing adventure that is both challenging and enjoyable for all skill levels. It is a joy to play, whether you aspire to break one hundred twenty or par of seventy. Any missed shots will be due to the distracting beauty of the Atlantic Ocean, the islands and the colourful sailboats tacking in the wind.

After your round, come in and sample some of the finest seafood found in Nova Scotia. We're told the seafood chowder is superb.

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Focus on financial health

Black Star takes simplified approach to finance **By Heather Laura Clarke**

When someone is embarrassed about the state of their finances, they're less likely to ask a professional for help. But Wendy Brookhouse says that's exactly when they need expert advice the most.

"We always hear 'I'm going to get my stuff sorted out and then I'll come see you,'" says Brookhouse. "But if you have a cut on your arm, do you wait for it to be healed before you talk to a doctor? Of course not."

Brookhouse is the founder and Chief Strategist of The Black Star Group and has been providing down-to-earth financial services to entrepreneurs, professionals and business owners for more than a decade.

"We want people to realize: you are where you are. There's no need to be ashamed or embarrassed about your financial state, because that isn't serving you," says Brookhouse. "It's so important for us to get people to start talking about their money."

At the 2016 Halifax Business Awards, Black Star Group was a 2016 finalist for Small Business of the Year. Brookhouse says it was an honour to have been recognized and the nomination led to even more connections as Black Star grew quickly.

Brookhouse has been travelling across Canada and the U.S., giving keynote addresses on financial health and Black Star is now offering lunch-and-learn sessions for businesses.

While the information on financial health is certainly useful for employees, Brookhouse says it's actually the employers who are really benefiting from these sessions.

"There is so much data showing the correlation between how your employees deal with their money and their productivity at work," says Brookhouse. "Studies have shown up to 25 per cent of a company's payroll is lost due to financial stress."

She adds that people don't have the ability to compartmentalize: if they're worried about their finances, it's going to affect them in the workplace. Brookhouse says there's been a lot of interest in these new lunch-and-learn sessions because

*Wendy Brookhouse,
Founder and Chief Strategist
at The Black Star Group.*



employers want to help their employees straighten up their finances — and reduce their stress levels — to better focus on their work.

She encourages any business that brings Black Star in for a lunch-and-learn to make a donation to Junior Achievement of Nova Scotia, which offers programs like Economics for Success, Dollars with Sense and Investment Strategies.

"They're doing such amazing work around financial literacy in schools," says Brookhouse, who is currently writing a book about financial health for women. "If we're able to teach this next generation about money and give them the right information from the very beginning, they're going to be smarter and more empowered with their money."

While she has high hopes the next generation will get off to a good start, Brookhouse says many baby boomers, gen-Xers and millennials are suffering now from financial stress — and it's affecting people in all income brackets.

"It's not about how much money you make. In fact, it's more likely that if you make good money, you have debt you want to get rid of," says Brookhouse. "A lot of people have debt because they haven't been taught how to deal with their money properly and we don't want anyone to feel badly about it."

"If there's debt to be dealt with, we'll help you deal with it."

While a traditional financial plan will lay out how much to save and where to invest it, Brookhouse says Black Star's plans go beyond those specifics.

"Instead of just focusing on 'do this and then in 30 years you'll be fine,' we add in a layer of how you can achieve that while still having a life now," says Brookhouse. "It's important to look into the future, but you still have to optimize your situation for today."

She says Black Star advisors sit down with clients and figure out how to reduce their stress and anxiety over money. They help them get a system in place that addresses everything from the balance in their chequing account to their insurance coverage.

"People are crying out for true advice on how to get where they want to go — not just strictly investment advice," says Brookhouse. "It needs to be a conversation about all of the things your money touches."

She says the Black Star team has a "big, hairy, audacious goal" of changing one million lives through financial health. They know they can't do it alone, so they regularly train independent advisors on their holistic planning system.

"We really are in tune with our clients because their success is our success," says Brookhouse. "We get a little too excited when we make a difference in someone's life. There's always a lot of high-fiving going on in the office!"

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