



Impact

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COMPENSATION EMPLOYEES' UNION

Coaching: A workplace panacea or headache?

Most people are familiar with the word “coach.” Some of us think about a school volleyball coach or a child’s soccer coach while others may think of TV shows like *The Biggest Loser*. The Vancouver Chapter of the International Coach Federation, ICF, breaks professional coaching into three categories, executive, leadership and life.

Regardless of the type of coach you are familiar with, these days, many employers are using coaches to assist with the learning process. According to the University of British Columbia, Human Resources website, coaching sessions immediately after training increases the learning effectiveness by as much as 88% while coaching alone increases learning effectiveness by 28%.

Wikipedia defines coaching as “a method of directing, instructing and training a person or group of people, with the aim to achieve some goal or develop specific skills”. But the way organizations apply coaching varies widely. Some employers use coaches as a means of focusing on specific organizational targets while others use coaching as a way to oversee employee performance.

In most unionized settings, including the CEU, the latter can run afoul of collective agreement provisions. For example, Article 12 of the CEU agreement states employees have the right to call a steward into a meeting if they are concerned the meeting could lead to discipline. While the Board has argued coaching is not a process leading to discipline, the CEU intends to make sure that coaching does not slide into performance management or a process for discussing private and confidential health matters.

If CEU members are approached about coaching, or if during the coaching process itself, subjects such as attendance or health are broached, you have the right to

ask for a steward. Questions or probing around health issues are taboo and must not be discussed with a manager. These types of discussions are within the scope of the Return to Work Coordinators who operate under strict confidentiality measures designed to help employees.

To achieve coaching best practices organizations must apply the principles of coaching follow-up. That means employees apply new skills to situations as they arise, and that in turn, anchors the learning for each person. This type of transformational learning environment supports employees as they learn new work methods or strive to achieve some other type of workplace goal.

Another important thing to know about coaching is that it is a confidential and intensive process involving a series of one-on-one meetings lasting a minimum of two hours a month. Individual goals will vary and can include:

- fine tuning a skill
- accelerated learning
- solving a problem
- creating change or growing with change

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Coaching: A workplace panacea or headache? con't

The coaching process holds the focus on the individual's goal, accelerates movement toward the goal, reinforces learning and change, and increases self-empowerment. Because of the high costs of maintaining this intensive process, many employer initiatives do not achieve their overall objectives.

The CEU really questions whether management is prepared to spend the time and money necessary to achieve coaching best practices. After all, spending a minimum of two hours a month on each member involved with coaching would be an enormous cost. "We just don't believe management is prepared to make that type of investment in its employees," said Sandra Wright, CEU President.

In addition to cost factors, some coaching programs fail because of the lack of qualified coaches. It takes time to transition a safe and interactive rapport into meaningful employee-directed outcomes so, having qualified coaches will be key to the success of this program.

Today, coaching is a recognized accredited discipline with coaches typically completing university or college credits and a practicum prior to starting their practice. The CEU will oppose a process where someone with one or two coaching courses becomes an employee coach.

If the Board follows through with its planned coaching initiative, the CEU expects all coaches to meet the standards outlined above. That means each coach will be fully accredited, follow strict rules of confidentiality, develop a level of trust with each employee, jointly develop coaching goals with the employee and ensure there is no blurring of the lines differentiating coaching from performance management.

"We don't think it's practical for managers to perform as coaches. If the Board wants to add coaching to its training toolkit, that might work if we have qualified coaches. As it stands, managers are not qualified, and frankly, we don't believe most of them are interested in becoming coaches," said Wright.

CEU files grievance over mean spirited labour relations

A dispute has arisen, between the CEU and the Board, concerning temporary part time care and nurturing leaves. In late summer, an employee wanted to terminate her temporary care and nurturing leave and return to full time work. She wanted to ensure her supplementary employment benefits (SEB) top up under sub clause 35.09 was based on full time work.

As far as the CEU is concerned, that is her right under the collective agreement but the employer said no. A grievance was filed and arbitration dates are scheduled in March 2010.

Prior to the last round of bargaining, CEU members taking a care and nurturing leave under sub clause 35.09 were required to be absent from work for a minimum of ten (10) working days. This fact created child care difficulties and effectively meant most employees had to take a full time leave.

To overcome this problem, the CEU and the employer negotiated several agreements for temporary part time

care and nurturing leaves. As a result, more people could take care and nurturing leaves. It is important to note these agreements date back to 2003.

According to the employer, if an employee on a temporary part time care and nurturing leave subsequently goes off work on maternity leave, then the SEB and time-related benefits including vacation, sick leave and seniority, will be prorated, i.e. based on part time hours. But what if that employee wants to return to a full time schedule prior to the start of the maternity leave?

The CEU believes employees have existing collective agreement rights allowing them to cancel temporary part time arrangements. For example, an employee can cancel a temporary job share arrangement and go back to full time work. In doing so, that employee would not have her/his benefits and SEB prorated if s/he subsequently went on a maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

If employees can cancel a temporary job share without



CEU files grievance over mean spirited labour relations

penalty to their future benefits and SEB, why is the employer insisting on punishing employees who cancel a temporary part time care and nurturing leave? The CEU believes treating one group of temporary part time employees differently than another is arbitrary, discriminatory and in bad faith.

The employer is also trying to paint the union as the “bad guy.” They claim the union is trying to negotiate full time benefits for full time employees who are voluntarily working part time. That is a convenient omission of the full story.

As noted above, employees in a trial job share can opt out of the temporary part time schedule and revert to full time work prior to commencing maternity, parental or adoption leave. These employees receive all of the benefits of a full time employee, including SEB top up. These rights were gained by the union through arbitration and subsequent negotiation.

Why is the employer taking this mean spirited stance where women are the sole targets? The cost to the

employer for this benefit is also relatively small because it involves the difference between 75% of salary and the EI amount paid, for the prescribed periods in sub clause 37.05. We can only conclude this is a money grab during a recessionary period.

It is also quite perplexing that the employer is deviating from language that has worked for all concerned for a minimum of six years.

This new stance comes directly from Labour Relations and is supported by the Vice President of Corporate Development and Human Resources. It does not come from Human Resources or line management. It is mean spirited and indicative of the way Labour Relations has approached issues during the last several months.

Because the employer continues to insist on this regressive and punitive approach to SEB top up and time related benefits, employees will be forced to take full time care and nurturing leaves or work full time. The union will report the outcome of the upcoming arbitration in a future *Impact*.

Creating health and safety awareness

What happens when you are threatened at work or when you wonder about your own health and safety? Do you attempt to resolve the issue on your own or is there someone available to help?

Article 58 stipulates that each office will have a local health and safety committee mandated to investigate incidents and/or potential incidents.

If you do not know who the safety representatives are in your area, you can find a list on the Safety Committee bulletin board located in each office.

According to David Farrell, CEU Treasurer and Co-Chair of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee, “It’s easy for our members to get focused on their work and to forget we have safety committees dedicated to addressing health and safety issues for Board employees.”

July’s *Impact* featured an article about vehicle safety and the need for regular vehicle maintenance, including the types of repairs Board vehicles get and when they

occur. CEU steward, Paul Stephens championed those vehicle safety issues.

Earlier this summer, Abbotsford steward, Amy Goulding, started wondering about what to do about the large number of ergonomic complaints in her office. After conducting a poll, Goulding found 20 of the 26 people

interviewed had ergonomic problems. The issues included eye strain and wrist, neck and shoulder pain.

“I was alarmed over the number of ergonomic complaints, and at first I wasn’t sure about what to do. Once I gathered the information, about how many people had problems and the types of problems, it was pretty clear we

needed to get the health and safety committee involved,” noted Goulding.

Since then, Abbotsford staff has received support from a Board ergonomist. One of the problems reported by staff related to the use of dual monitors. On the advice of the ergonomist, staff understands they need to keep their



monitors close together to reduce the amount of eye and neck swivel. Some staff has also ordered computer glasses to help reduce eye strain associated with high computer usage.

“The issues relating to eye strain are not fully resolved. Members can get prescription computer glasses paid for by the employer so it’s important for people to do that if they’re having problems,” said Goulding.

Members experiencing ergonomic issues related to computer usage or other issues related to health and safety are encouraged to report these issues to a representative of their health and safety committee. “One of our goals is to raise the profile of health and safety issues within the Board so our members get their issues resolved quickly,” said Farrell.

News from our CEU committee members

IT and Finance technological change committee

Some progress has been made on a number of issues including work assignments and the need to develop a culture of open communication within the IT and Finance departments. These changes flow, in part, from the Board’s decision to serve notice of technological change and to alter the reporting relationships within these two departments.

Article 51 and focus jobs

Under the collective agreement, work assignment to a different department in the same classification and work location should be occurring through the expression of interest lists in Article 51. Once a member places her/himself on this list, if an opening comes up in a department, and based on seniority, members are then given the new work assignment. During this reorganization, the CEU discovered the Board was not applying Article 51 language for some positions.

Complicating the issue of compliance with the expression of interest lists was the Board’s practice of assigning “focuses” to some job classifications. They essentially saw these focuses as a different job classification. They did not want to allow employees with different focuses to be able to access Article 51 rights.

This practice was akin to saying every person with a different type of training was in a different job classification by virtue of the training. The CEU believes this approach pigeon-holes employees into single employee jobs and is contrary to the collective agreement.

In the end, it was agreed the Article 51 expression of interest and selections would take place. If any

problems arose from job classifications with focuses they would be handled separately. That process was completed, and every member was placed into the department they selected.

Now the Board has posted “expression of interest” lists for classifications, without focuses. With everyone in their department of choice, we have time to discuss possible solutions to the focus issue.

Cultural change

During the TELUS issue, and then again during CMS implementation, it was apparent, to the CEU, the culture in some areas of IT results in members feeling they cannot speak freely. These members fear their advancement/training opportunities will be removed as a type of retribution for speaking out. Whether or not this feeling is justified is not at issue. What is at issue is CEU members should never be fearful to give their respectful and professional opinion to a manager.

To address the lack of communication between the CEU and IT management, the committee agreed to hire an outside facilitator. A facilitated process will assist the committee to review the focus and access to training issues. This process will help to establish a forum where the union can discuss issues with senior management. The CEU wants to establish transparent training opportunities accessible to all IT members.

IT & Finance technological change committee members:

Sandra Wright, Adam Andrews, Kathy Perkins,
Robert Glenn, Adele Peters

The perils of unpaid overtime

With the implementation of CMS, paid overtime for CEU members jumped dramatically. It was obvious this kind of carte blanche overtime could not continue forever, and, as expected, this fall the Board initiated stricter guidelines for overtime approval.

A possible outcome of this stricter oversight on overtime may be an increase in “unpaid” overtime by members. Some CEU members say they are in a Catch 22 situation. It’s either work unpaid overtime and

jeopardize your health or fall behind while the backlog of files keeps growing. But working unpaid overtime is not a good thing for CEU members or the employer.

A recent Ontario Superior Court decision found accounting firm KPMG liable for \$10 million to compensate employees for unpaid overtime. These employees worked more than 44 hours per week without overtime. CIBC also lost a class action lawsuit on overtime. The central complaint was workers were knowingly given more tasks than they could reasonably accomplish within regular working hours.

Sound familiar? Workplace cultures in many organizations have traveled down the slippery slope of unreasonable workload, and more and more tasks are piled upon an ever shrinking workforce. Up until now, employers have happily allowed their employees to shoulder the burden of that extra work, and have turned a blind eye to free overtime.

These recent court rulings have raised a warning flag that employees have had enough, and are at long last demanding, through the courts, if necessary, reasonable workloads or appropriate overtime pay.

The CEU has heard unpaid overtime is quietly starting to climb. We are concerned about the sustainability of those long overtime hours, paid or unpaid, and the affect it is having on our members’ health.

We believe the root cause of this pressure to work unpaid overtime is linked to the poor performance of CMS, and the new management directive on overtime. Meanwhile, the increased volume of tasks and the

increased time it takes to do basic claim work keeps growing. Management is failing to take adequate steps to reduce these pressures.

Unlike the employers noted above, in our unionized workplace overtime is voluntary. If you need to work overtime, make sure the employer pays for your time

because free overtime masks the volume of work on your desk. It also allows the employer to keep insisting the current staffing model is fine when we know it is not.

Without more people, the need for overtime will continue. That’s what we’re fighting for right now, more staff.

Unpaid overtime shifts the responsibility for getting the work done away from the employer and places it squarely onto your shoulders. And that allows the Board to continue to ignore the impact CMS has had on work volumes.

“All this focus on pending lists and pressure to pump up the volume is offensive. These are all silent and not so silent messages to work overtime even when the same manager is denying overtime. In short, the employer has created a very unhealthy workplace. We want the employer to start canvassing for volunteers wishing to work overtime. Then we want them to use those volunteers to work on the heaviest caseloads, regardless of which SDL they are in. That way, the heaviest caseloads get the attention they need and our members don’t get burned out,” said Sandra Wright, CEU President.

CEU members have reported a building cycle of tasks, increased time to complete basic steps within a claim, CMS system changes and a long list of other CMS-related problems. “We know these challenges require an increase to the current staffing levels. Without more people, the need for overtime will continue. That’s what we’re fighting for right now, more staff. If management refuses to act, then we think our members have every right to put in a normal work day and leave the work to pile up,” said Wright.

Changing the face of mental illness is important for everyone

There are not a lot of black and white facts around mental illness but it's the people you notice. Some of us may conjure images of people we've passed on the street, or our sense of wonder about what is "wrong" with him/her, while others may feel fear at the thought of trying to cope with a mental illness.

Mental illness has a major impact on our relationships, education, productivity and quality of life. Approximately 20% of us will experience some type of mental illness and the remaining 80% will be affected by the mental illness of a family member, friend or colleague.

Considering how common mental illness is, it is surprising how little many of us know about it. It is also surprising the social stigma attached to mental illness continues to represent a barrier to treatment and acceptance in our communities.

Mental illness does not discriminate; it affects people of all cultures, ages, economic and educational levels. One area of mental health is mood disorders. It includes things like depression and bipolar disorder.

While research shows approximately eight percent of adults will experience a major depression in their lifetime, the actual number of people suffering from depression is unknown because many people delay treatment due to the social stigma attached to depression.

Others do not realize they are suffering from a mental illness and hospital records often distort or hide the actual diagnosis so these cases are not part of the statistical picture. Worldwide, major depression is the leading cause of years lived with disability.

The CEU is concerned about the prevalence of mental illness in society at-large and what that means for the microcosm of Board employees. A review of the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) statistics, January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008, indicates the overall utilization of the program is up 11.40% from the previous year. This increase is for all programs covered by EFAP.

According to the Report's authors, "Stress and anxiety/depression continue to be leaders in why employees seek out the EFAP services. There is a direct correlation between stress, depression/anxiety, relationship and health issues." The authors go on to note stress is a precursor of depression and steps need to be taken to address employee stress.

Keeping these factors in mind, and recognizing the additional stress people are experiencing in the workplace due to workplace change, CMS, and other factors, we believe the timing is right to start talking about mental illness and how it affects the workplace.

In the last round of bargaining, the Parties agreed to form a Mental Health committee.

EFAP report draws correlation between stress and health issues

Although the committee is in its early stages, one of the committee's priorities is to begin an educational process for employees and managers. "There are many resources available to the committee to start the educational process, and we hope that, over time, we will help to reduce the social stigma associated with mental illness in the workplace," notes Sandra Wright, CEU President. The committee is also exploring ways to conduct an employee health survey to establish a baseline measure for employee health indicators.

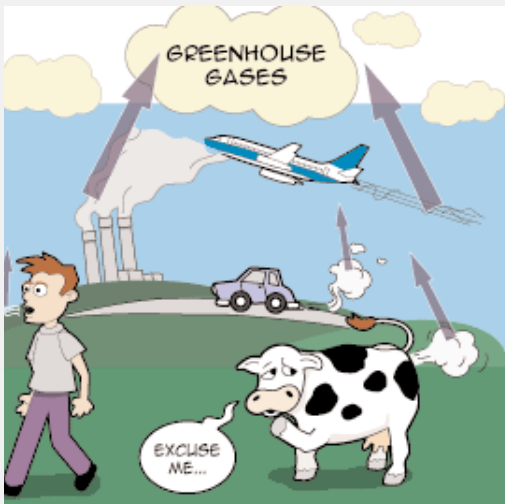
Two of the union's broader goals concerning mental health are to help put supportive processes into place, so co-workers and managers are capable of helping when mental illness issues arise at work, and for people to get the help they need to be successful in their work.

If you are struggling with a mental illness or feeling anxious about someone, help is close by. Contact the EFAP services or if you are not sure how to access those services, please speak to one of the Return to Work Coordinators and they will assist you. All services are strictly confidential.

Changing the workplace culture

Strange Facts

The Danish government is preparing to impose a flatulence tax on cows arguing a cow produces four tons of greenhouse gases every year. That's more polluting than a car. On average cars produce 2.7 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year. The government is readying a \$100.00 annual head tax on each cow (CCPA, July/August 2009).



Chickens in South Africa refused to eat a new supply of corn. After investigation, it was determined the corn was genetically modified to produce proteins that are toxic to certain insects and weeds (Reuters).



In 2007, the union and the employer supported a workplace cultural assessment for Safety Officers, Hygiene Officers, Investigations Officers and support staff. A year later, the investigator, Larry Axelrod, issued his report.

During the last year, employees have waited for the employer to develop an action plan in response to the Report's recommendations. What accounts for this apparent foot dragging?

According to the Frank Lanzarotta, CEU Vice-President, "There have been many, many meetings trying to get the employer to issue an action plan. Management says they have a plan but they're waiting for final approval. I honestly don't know what the hold-up is."

Historically, the officers raised questions about employer demands including accountability and tracking changes, delays for issuing warning letters and penalties to employers, industry segmentation of officers and the Board's strategic direction to reduce claims costs rather than injury or death rates.

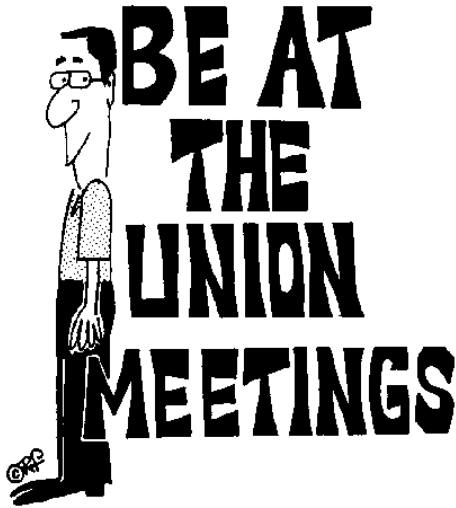
The union knows the delay in implementing Axelrod's recommendations does not play well with its members. Courtenay office OSO, Norm Schlosser states, "Management's delay to address known concerns is like a Field Officer seeing a violation

on a job site and not dealing with it!" According to Axelrod, organizational leaders need to adopt many changes including the following:

- Clarify the nature of and expectations for managers and SRO roles and communicate outcomes to officers;
- Review and communicate the established protocol for collaboration between Prevention and Investigation officers for situations when they both are called on to respond to fatal incidents;
- Involve officers, where possible, in strategic planning efforts for their regions;
- Offer transparency in decision-making by providing officers with clear rationale for directions and decisions that they believe do not adhere to "prevention logic;" and
- Develop a process to retain the knowledge and experiential learning of senior officers due to retire over the next few years.

"Prevention is an important part of the work our members do. We need to get the relationship between Prevention and its officers back on track. That's why it's important for management to act. Too much time has gone by and our members deserve and expect a response," noted Lanzarotta.

Look who's counting



ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

OCTOBER 26, 2009
RICHMOND CURLING CLUB
5:00 PM

Your Executive Members

Sandra Wright, President
Rachel Barbour, Director
Frank Lanzarotta, Vice-President
David Clarabut, Director
David Farrell, Treasurer
Bill Bucci, Director
Carol Velon, Secretary
Chris Lundquist, Director
Kathy Saul, Chair - Shop Stewards
Adele Peters, Director

When it comes to grievances, attendance related issues are high on the union's priority list because the rise in attendance related issues is striking.

Recently, the union investigated a situation where a member met the KSA for a job but was denied the position due to "poor" attendance. In another situation, a member was denied a job because they were already in an accommodation and management didn't want them to move into a new position. The union filed grievances in response to the employer's position, and they are working their way through the collective agreement processes.

In the meantime, it's important for CEU members to know how management views attendance. In the past, the attendance awareness process focused on awareness. If an employee was absent from work and those absences created a concern for the manager, the employee and the manager met to discuss the situation. Management then offered coaching and other supports in an effort to help the employee.

Recently, the employer used what they described as "below standard" attendance as grounds to deny members the seniority provisions of Article 17. Under that Article, if you meet the KSA or SA for the position the senior candidate gets job.

Now the employer claims attendance records are part of the KSA or SA for all jobs and if a person does not meet the attendance standard, they will not be awarded the position.

If CEU members find themselves in this situation, please contact a steward in your jurisdiction immediately.

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