

# SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Volume 1, Issue 1



**Thriving In Changing Times**

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**Survival of the Fittest:  
Thriving in Changing Times**

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# Introduction

There's no question – these are challenging times for organizations.

“Global economic crisis”, “recession”, “downturns”, “cutbacks and layoffs” – these messages seem impossible to escape. Discussions permeate in our workplaces, in the media, and our homes. We are advised to switch to survival mode and brace ourselves to weather the storm.

It's easy to get trapped by the negativity and fear that may be weaving through your workplace. Leaders and employees often turn to Human Resources for insight and advice on navigating changing times and dealing with the impacts of employee uncertainty and apprehension.

Progressive organizations consider the current circumstances, but also think longer term. They recognize that while times may be uncertain now, the future is sure to bring change and opportunities. By shifting the focus toward the opportunities presented during change, your organization can thrive during uncertainty. These are often the best times to examine existing strategy, processes and practices, leverage technology, get creative, and build enduring relationships with employees. This approach will position your organization to thrive and lead through the recovery and beyond.

In response to these unprecedented times, we have gathered a group of top experts to share how they are helping employers shift their strategic focus in this positive direction. This publication is packed with practical ideas, tips, and techniques that you can implement and create proactive results for your organization.

Successful organizations and individuals act while others wait on circumstances to turn around. In your role, you have the opportunity to take the lead and ensure the success of your organization.

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# Meet Our Experts

## Jeff Palamar — Partner, Taylor McCaffrey LLP



Jeff Palamar is a partner with Taylor McCaffrey LLP in Winnipeg. He practices in the areas of employment, labour and administrative law, including human rights, sports, and civil litigation. He solves problems, mostly for employers. Since 2006, Jeff has been listed by the Best Lawyers in Canada for Labour and Employment Law.

Jeff was a longtime instructor with the University of Manitoba's Continuing Education Division in Human Resource Management. He is the Chair of KidSport Manitoba, honorary legal counsel to Team Canada Volleyball, and volunteers as Ombudsperson with the Canadian Paralympic Committee.

## Sherry Panciera — President, North Star Human Resources Inc.



Under Sherry Panciera's leadership as President and CEO, North Star has earned its well deserved recognition as a leader in the applicant tracking industry and has experienced overwhelming success by helping organizations leverage applicant tracking technology to recruit and hire more strategically, efficiently, and cost-effectively.

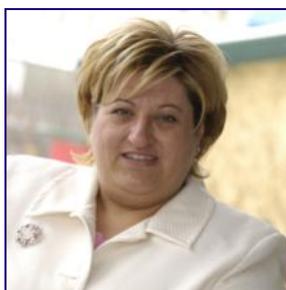
Earlier this year, North Star launched its state-of-the-art New Release Applicant Tracking Software, which has received many 'best in class' accolades and has far-exceeded the expectations of not only other industry experts and critics, but also the client base North Star currently serves.

## Diane A. Panting — Vice President, Aon Consulting



Diane Panting, CHRP, CCP, IPMA-CP is Vice President, Aon Consulting, Winnipeg serving clients in Western Canada. She focuses on the strategic development of people and leadership perspectives in support of organizational success. Diane partners with clients of all sizes from all sectors identifying and developing client specific solutions related to total rewards, employee/ executive compensation and incentives, HR strategy and program delivery and performance management. Aon Consulting is a local, national and international human resources consulting firm with expertise in compensation and rewards, benefits, pensions, employee communication and strategic human capital initiatives.

## Wendy Phaneuf — Managing Director, The Training Source



When she established The Training Source in 1997, Wendy addressed a gap in the market – to help organizational leaders create workplaces where employees thrive and perform at their best each day. Along with her team of highly experienced and skilled consultants and trainers, Wendy offers creative, practical solutions to common workplace issues – decreasing employee morale, diminished productivity, team inefficiency and employee retention challenges.

In 2006, Wendy was honoured with the Manitoba Woman Entrepreneur of the Year award for her dedication to providing exceptional programs and services to her valued clients.

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# Gaining the Competitive Advantage:

By Sherry Panciera

## Recruiting During Tough Times

*Discover how successful organizations are benefiting and taking advantage of recruiting opportunities during uncertain economic times.*

**H**iring freezes, layoffs, consolidations and business closures. Although belt-tightening is not necessarily a bad strategy during such times, it shouldn't lead you to cut back on all recruitment activities. In fact, many organizations choose to see opportunities where others see challenges and recognize that a down time is an opportunity to take away market share from competitors – and this applies to recruiting and hiring, too. Many businesses cut back on hiring during a downturn, often opting to let some staff go. Businesses that are opportunity-minded and equipped to act fast can pick up some really talented people.



**Did you know . . .** “Emergency” hiring is often more expensive than a typical hire because of the urgency inherent to the process. In most cases, it is more expensive to start, stop, and restart your recruiting process than it is to keep it in motion. “Continuous” recruiting allows you to plan and budget both your time and recruiting dollars. To support continuous recruiting and building a candidate pipeline many organizations are utilizing applicant tracking software to automate the process of capturing, organizing, and ranking candidates. Also, when you have developed a candidate pipeline, it is very easy to ramp up and accelerate the process when you do need to hire more people faster. Instead of recruiting from a dead stop, your process is proactive – already in motion gathering and sorting candidates before you need them.

There are advantages to recruiting during tough times and organizations with a strategic perspective recognize and capitalize on these advantages:

### **1 The availability of more high quality candidates.**

Not only are more candidates available during times of high unemployment, but higher quality candidates are seeking opportunities as well. Smart companies are hiring talent they might not have access to once the market recovers. Capturing these candidates now when they are available and developing a candidate pipeline, or pool of candidates, for current and future employment consideration will save you time and money in the long run.

### **2 Less competition in the marketplace.**

Many companies reduce recruiting budgets during tough economic times. The result? Recruiting activity and effectiveness of your competitors will decrease dramatically giving your company an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage. Candidates become easier to attract because they have fewer options and offers to choose from. Additionally, as competitor companies conduct large-scale 'public' layoffs, their reputation and external image as an employer dramatically weakens – thus providing increased opportunities for companies that

have maintained or strategically strengthened their employment brand during this period.

### **3 Tough times make you stronger.**

A tight budget forces you to focus more on hiring metrics, return on investment, and a strong business case. Whether you are a small or large organization, it's a fundamental business theory – what gets measured, gets done. Applicant tracking software is a cost-effective tool for organizations of all sizes to help you measure and analyze what is and isn't working within the recruiting and hiring function. An analytics and metrics focus gives you the advantage of identifying the most effective recruiting strategies and hiring approaches. By understanding what is working well, eliminating what is not working well, streamlining processes, and focusing on best practices, you will eventually strengthen the recruiting and hiring function overall.

Everyday in business we are forced to make choices. I challenge you...do you follow the majority and see the economic downturn as a time to cut back or maintain the status quo **or**, do you choose to recognize and take advantage of the many business and leadership opportunities presented in disguise? ❖

*Finding great candidates can be like looking for a needle in the haystack*



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# Keeping Morale Up:

## Five Things Employees Want to Know

By Wendy Phaneuf



In uncertain times, employee engagement often becomes vulnerable to the negativity and fear that seep into the workplace. Employees see fluctuations in business volumes, hear rumours, and can easily get caught up in hearsay. The simplest changes can fuel a fire of speculation about the future, productivity can begin to slide, and employee morale and retention often suffers.

You can increase the likelihood that employee morale doesn't fall victim to the changing times we are all facing. Strengthening the abilities of your leaders to build trust and communicate should be your first priority and will pay off greatly. Strong leaders will engage your workforce and ready employees to move the organization toward renewed success.

During uncertainty, there are questions on the minds of many employees – by responding to these questions, a leader can re-

duce employee anxiety and avoid difficulties with poor morale and lack of productivity.

### 1 Where are we heading?

Even during difficult times, the big picture should always focus on success. People need to feel inspired to thrive, not simply survive. Review and re-focus your employees on the long-range vision for the organization. Clearly communicate “the why” of these goals, and frame them in a way that gets employees excited about making them happen. When people believe in what they are doing,

*Strong leaders will engage your workforce and ready employees to move the organization toward renewed success.*

they are more likely to confront unplanned changes and obstacles as a natural part of the process.

### 2 What's REALLY going on?

Everyone understands that failing to communicate and share information is the worst approach during uncertain times – yet this is the most common cause of poor morale and productivity. Lack of information and infrequent communication can spur speculation and lead to discord. Be transparent and share what you can about what's happening at organizational, business unit, team, and individual levels. Be honest in explaining current circumstances and what the organization faces moving forward. Regularly communicate and share progress and don't forget about the importance of face-to-face time with employees, particularly with top performers who contribute significantly to the organization's success.

### 3 How can I help?

Engage employees in determining what they can do within their jobs to help the organization thrive during uncertain times. Help them connect to the company's goals directly to their jobs by showing how their actions impact the overall success of the organization. Involve employees in resolving job-related problems. When they suggest an idea that will help move the team forward, encourage them to make it happen and recognize them for their initiative. Employee collaboration and involvement is key – engagement creates a sense of urgency, ownership, and accountability.

### 4 Why are we doing this?

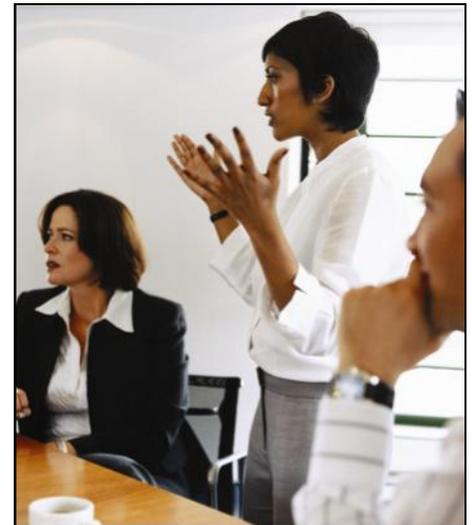
Remember, your employees are the closest to their jobs and often know what is working well and what processes need improvement. By providing staff with the opportunity to improve and streamline processes, you will increase efficiencies and reap the added benefit of employee development and increased team strength. Case in point: a large Financial Institution tasked employee groups with identifying the procedures that most frustrated employees and customers. By listening and implementing employee suggestions, the company saved over \$100 million in recurring annual costs.



### 5 What is in it for me?

It's always important to recognize and reward employees for their efforts – but during uncertain times, it becomes even more important to acknowledge people for their commitment. When resources are tight, it can be more difficult to recognize employees financially, so it's important to get creative with employee recognition. Providing time-off rewards, options to telecommute, or schedule flexibility can go a long way toward showing employees that you see and appreciate their commitment. Of course, the most important recognition is still a word of praise from an employee's manager. Sincere, timely, and frequent recognition is essential to keeping day-to-day motivation high during good or difficult times.

Productive, committed employees are your organization's greatest asset, especially during uncertainty. To navigate challenges, train your managers and supervisors to communicate, engage employees, and recognize their contribution. With strong leadership, employees will remain committed to consistent performance and helping your organization to thrive once the business climate improves. ❖



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# Addressing the Tough Questions:

By Jeff Palamar

## The Importance of Clear Expectations

*Why it's important to be clear with new hires about work expectations — especially during challenging times.*

Imagine the following employer side of a discussion with a third year employee who is threatening a claim for overtime:

- “You want overtime pay? You're a manager. You're not entitled.”
- “We pay for your cell phone and home Internet purposely so you can work evenings and weekends.”
- “It's give and take. We just do what the job requires.”
- “You got almost all your vacation last year, and we only called you at home every couple of days.”
- “Forget it, that's why you're getting the big bucks!”

The fact that this discussion is happening long after employment started is itself a problem, and suggests costly litigation ahead. Imagine instead the following employer side of a discussion which happened before the employee was even hired:

- “We pay for your cell phone and home Internet. We expect you to be available in case of emergency at any

time and, as customers often need help on Saturdays, every Saturday.”

- “Once a month you need to leave home on a Sunday night to travel and be in meetings first thing Monday morning.”
- “We expect you get a certificate through night courses at college. We pay for that, if you pass. You can have exam days off to study.”
- “Your salary includes all of this, which generally shouldn't take up more than 50 hours a week. If it ever looks like it will, and we need to know in advance, we'll arrange for time off.”

- “If we are going to terminate, we'll provide three months' notice or pay in lieu.”

The most common problem I see time and again is a disconnect between what employers and employees expect of the relationship. In tough times a prospective employee may not want to raise tough issues on fear of not getting hired. The employer may be too busy to raise them. Only rarely are they raised at the appropriate time, which of course is at the start of the relationship. Why would you talk about something potentially controversial, like overtime or how to end the relationship, before it is even started?



*The most common problem...is a disconnect between what employers and employees expect of the relationship.*

Why would you bother getting a lawyer involved to help you make sure that your written agreement is legal and clear, when you can simply count on everyone being reasonable and fair?

If you ignore the tough questions, you risk things going off track, leaving it up to you to negotiate the best you can out of a bad situation. If negotiation fails then a third party, such as a court or labour board, will decide what happens. That very likely will be far worse than what you want or could have initially negotiated had you chosen to raise the issue when the relationship was new and on good terms.

The reality is that in tough times, employees often are let go or leave, and if so, good luck expecting everyone to be as fair

and reasonable as they were upon the hiring. Instead, call your lawyers and expect a year or two of inconvenience and frustration and thousands of dollars spent. Ultimately, everyone will be unhappy and in disbelief over how something that started out so well, turned out so badly.

Properly addressing the tough questions at the start and then clearly documenting things doesn't have to be confrontational or complicated. You have much more to fear from playing ostrich, ignoring what is around you, and just hoping for the best. ❖



## **Labour and Employment Law**

**Jeff Palamar**

Direct Phone: 204.988.0364

Direct Fax: 204.953.7203

Email: [jpalamar@tmlawyers.com](mailto:jpalamar@tmlawyers.com)



**TAYLOR McCAFFREY** LLP  
BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

9th Floor, 400 St. Mary Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4K5  
[www.tmlawyers.com](http://www.tmlawyers.com)

# Pay for Performance:

## Is it Right for Your Organization?

By Diane Panting



**W**hen an organization pays employees this represents remuneration for something. What is the basis on which the pay is provided? How are decisions around pay made? Does pay link with the value that employees contribute to organizational results? How indeed can we effectively and fairly pay for performance? These are key questions as employee pay is typically a significant dollar item for employers.

In challenging economic times it only makes sense to seriously consider these questions. Rewarding and keeping your performers who help carry you through such times is imperative.

Pay for performance can be implemented by way of several vehicles, including base pay (salaries), short term incentives (bonuses) and long term incentives. Employers may hold the line on base pay increases overall in tough times but allow for the true performers to still receive increases based on results. It

*Rewarding and keeping your performers who help carry you through [challenging economic times] is imperative.*

continues to be imperative to get the base pay right and distributed appropriately – in tough times and when circumstances improve. So, how do we do this? Let's start at the beginning.

Base pay is determined in several ways. Typically, consideration is given to the internal value of the work required and what the external competitive market pays for similar jobs. Base pay or salary ranges combine these two perspectives. The most typical approaches are:

- Job rate – an employee progresses to the maximum of the salary range over time. There is no opportunity to earn beyond this level regard-

less of the level of performance. The job rate represents pay for satisfactory performance.

- Step rate – base pay increases are at set intervals and amounts are based on time in the job. The maximum achievable is the job rate.
- Merit pay – employees receive varying base pay increases based on performance differentials and position in the salary range – i.e. pay for performance. Employees can earn above the job rate up to a maximum for varying levels of above average performance only. Top performers may reach the salary range maximum.



- What direction does our business strategy require?
- What is our culture – what do we need it to be? Do we nurture and recognize performance and how?
- What base pay structure is currently in place and what is preferred? Do we want a pay for performance approach that allows for pay levels above job rate to recognize above satisfactory performance levels?
- Are we prepared to differentiate pay in a meaningful way based on performance?
- Do we have a solid performance management program that aligns with the pay plan?

The pay for performance characteristics embedded within merit pay is driving wide spread and increasing use of the method. Employers need to achieve organizational performance goals by incenting employee performance through aligned rewards – especially in tough times.

The benefits of a pay for performance approach include:

1. Higher levels of contributions by above average performers,

2. Rewarding more effective/key contributor employees, resulting in enhanced retention of top performers,
3. Enhanced ability to attract potential high performers who will be looking for appropriate return for their efforts, and
4. Disciplined salary cost management.

Realizing these benefits requires commitment of time, effort, resources, and leadership. The practical questions you should ask include:

Once you have these answers, you will need to, assess your competitive position on pay, determine your internal job values, construct salary ranges, and define your pay administration program. As well, short term incentives should be considered as part of your solution. Pay for performance may indeed be the way to go for your organization in order to make it through tough times – be prepared to invest the time, energy, and resources in getting it right You will be joining many employers who are. ❖



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# Recruiting in Challenging Economic Times:

By Sherry Panciera

## Practical Strategies to Survive & Thrive

*“How do we increase our company’s probability of not only surviving, but **thriving and prospering** during these challenging economic times?”*

**S**uccessful organizations are working smarter and even more strategically than we have seen in the past. Many recognize the opportunities that a high unemployment rate presents to their business, i.e. availability and diversity of talented candidates in the marketplace. Strategic organizations are taking advantage of the high unemployment rate to hire candidates they might not otherwise be able to attract and they are also leveraging technology to identify highly desirable candidates and improve their hiring processes.

*Think about recruiting from the candidate’s perspective – what information, interactivity and communication do candidates need and expect?*

I am often asked what cost-effective, practical recruiting strategies can be easily implemented during challenging economic times – here is the advice I share:



### **Develop a Healthy Candidate Pipeline**

Even if you’re not actively hiring, your company should be out there promoting itself as a potential employer and a great place to work. Candidates matter – whether you are in the market for them now or may be at some point in the future. The key to success is establishing and building long-term relationships with desirable candidates and treating them with respect, just like you would a customer or potential customer.

### **Leverage Technology**

Once your pipeline begins to expand, you will want to organize and manage it. Consider how effective sales people use customer relationship management (CRM) tools and software to con-

tinuously reach out and communicate with prospects and customers. Those same tools and techniques can be applied to recruiting to foster and engage your pipeline candidates. Most salespeople will tell you that it takes several interactions with a prospect before they become a customer. The same holds true with candidates – most will likely need multiple interactions/communication about your organization, culture, and why your organization is a great place to work before they would seriously consider a job offer.

Much of this interaction will start with a career site or the employment section of your website. **This is where the opportunity exists.** Many companies are still lacking in ‘branding’ or in the overall candidate experience of

### How to develop a healthy candidate pipeline and strengthen your reputation as an employer:

- Reach out to your candidate pipeline through your corporate careers web site. Promote it and make it attractive and easy for candidates to contact you.
- Initiate job/career alerts. Allow candidates to set up automated alerts advising them when jobs of interest become available. **BONUS!** Recipients of career alerts often forward them on to their peers.
- Utilize social networking sites (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) that are populated with the type of people with whom you'd like to connect and broadcast job/career opportunities.
- Write and distribute articles in print or online. Every market or profession has an association, interest group, or blog community — this is an excellent opportunity to attract and connect with some of your industry's sharpest candidates (i.e. the ones who keep abreast of industry developments) by way of publishing news, insight, and opinions.
- Utilize on-line job boards (Workopolis, Monster, etc.) — some are even free!

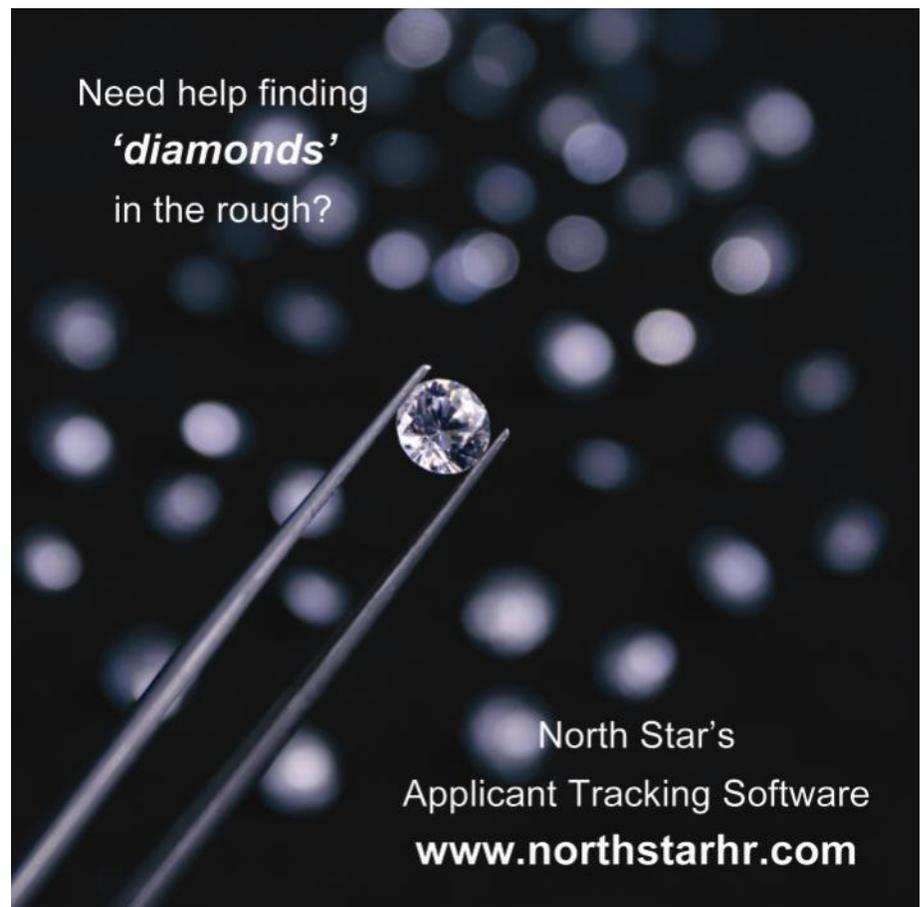
Building a candidate pipeline isn't just about reaching out and finding potential candidates; it's about making it easy for job candidates to find you. And the more ways they can find you, your pipeline expands...which leads to more hires!

recruiting, particularly when it comes to a well developed career website. Think about recruiting from the candidate's perspective — what information, interactivity and communication do candidates need and expect? One of the biggest disappointments for candidates is when they apply for a job and are never acknowledged or hear anything back. The reason candidates often reject job offers is because of the way they were treated (or not treated) during the recruitment/hiring process.

To overcome this, best practice organizations — small and large — are leveraging Applicant Tracking software (ATS) technology to effortlessly capture and organize candidate resumes, as well as

automate much of the administration, interactions, and processes associated with managing job postings, resumes, and communications with candidates and hiring managers. By leveraging technology you can gain insight (analysis, metrics, reports) into what is and isn't working within your organization's recruiting function, enabling you to become more strategic.

Organizations that are leveraging technology and are actively pursuing the development of a candidate pipeline are not only adhering to recruiting best practices, but are also well equipped and positioned to take full advantage of our current economic times. ❖



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# Paving the Road for Success:

By Wendy Phaneuf

## Employee Training and Development

*“In times of change the learners will inherit the earth.” ~ Eric Hoffer*

**M**any organizations react to declining revenues and activity by pulling back, going on the defensive, and cutting vital employee training and development. However, progressive companies embrace a commitment to expand training and development during these times – and reap the rewards.

We have never seen a time of such dramatic transition. Economic shifts, the evolution of technology, and changing work attitudes are creating unprecedented change. Creativity and resourcefulness are keys to success navigating change – rather than focusing on *resources* (which are often limited in tough times), focus on building the *resourcefulness* of your employees by focusing on three key training and development opportunities.

### **Make the Most of the Situation**

Early in the recent downturn, Toyota bucked the auto industry trend to pay workers to sit at home during temporary plant shutdowns. Viewing it as an opportunity to invest in its employees, the company engaged idle workers in intensive training to

sharpen their technical and interpersonal skills, improve quality control, and hone work processes. Industry experts estimate Toyota’s costs at \$35 million per month, but the company reported that the investment strategy led to major payoffs: employees were engaged and felt valued, numerous processes were enhanced, and workers were more productive than ever when production ramped up again.

*...Rather than  
focusing on resources,  
focus on building  
the resourcefulness of  
your employees...*

Capitalize on slow periods by focusing on closing employee skill gaps and providing development activities. Encourage leaders to collaborate with employees on individual [learning plans](#), identifying skill gaps and areas where each employee needs training. Be resourceful – not all training needs to be in a classroom. Consider peer training, online training, or sessions facilitated by your own internal experts.

### **Develop Your Stars**

Top performers are essential to navigating organizations through and out of tough times. Savvy competitors constantly survey the landscape for strong producers, leaving organizations vulnerable to losing their top performers, particularly if these individuals don’t feel valued or invested in.

Identify your strong performers and express confidence in their potential to move the organiza-



tion forward. Invest in their development through mentoring and other opportunities to diversify their knowledge and experience.

Engage seasoned employees and leaders as mentors and take great care when matching them with your high-potentials. The best mentor may not be from the same functional or professional background, and is often not the most senior person on the job. Base your selection on the mentor's attitude, knowledge of the organization, and leadership abilities. An effective mentoring relationship will help the high-potential to identify and develop the skills and knowledge for successful career progression.

### Revamp New Employee Onboarding

Slower hiring periods provide a terrific opportunity to redirect resources toward enhancing training and orientation of new hires. Investing in a comprehensive onboarding process will pay off in spades when things improve and you need to hire new employees.

Map out your existing orientation and training process. What is working well? What methods leave new employees confused

or uncertain about their job responsibilities?

Redefine your onboarding by determining the answers to the following questions:

**WHAT** key job information and processes do new hires need to learn?

**WHO** is the right person to provide onboarding in each key area or task?

**WHEN** is the most effective time to introduce each activity during onboarding?

**WHY** is each aspect of onboarding important and how does it relate to the organization's goals?

**WHERE and HOW** will various elements of onboarding and training occur?

By shifting your focus from scaling back to committing to key training and development activities, you will position your workforce to emerge from slow times with strengthened skills, knowledge, and capabilities for success. ❖



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# The “Standard” Non-Competition Agreement:

## Why it isn't Good Enough

By Jeff Palamar

**W**hen things are economically tight, it's tempting to cut corners and rely on a “standard” non-competition agreement. This is a recipe for disaster.

If the agreement goes beyond protecting an employer's legitimate interests, it will be invalid. Invalidation happens when it is “unreasonable” in some way – maybe by lasting too long, by covering too large a geographic area or by prohibiting too much. Is it really necessary to prohibit any work in the software development industry throughout North America for 2 years, when the employer builds web pages ex-

clusively in one province or state? What exactly is the “software development industry” anyway?

To enforce a non-competition agreement an employer has to prove it is reasonable in the circumstances. The court will not “read down” the agreement and make it reasonable. Feeling lucky? You'd better be if you just use a “standard” agreement.

Instead of gambling, consider realistically what you need and agree to something less restrictive but more likely to be enforceable. An example might be a non-solicitation agreement where, for a limited period of time after em-

ployment ends, the employee will not solicit the same business with certain defined customers.

Sometimes what makes sense for one employee will be quite unreasonable for another. An employee with no customer contact would not pose the same risk as an employee with lots, and so would need different restrictions after employment ends. Someone hired with an established customer list couldn't reasonably be stopped from seeing those same customers should employment end. The point is that one size does not fit all.

With proper advice you can draft an agreement that meets your needs and is legally enforceable, but there still has to be proof of any breach. If customers are not willing to testify, can you prove your case? More importantly, what steps can you take to protect your interests and decrease the likelihood of having to provide this legal proof.

Employees do not have the right to take confidential information from their employers and use it or disclose it for their own purposes. Still, though, what exactly is “confidential information”, in the context? Take care to ensure that what is supposedly confidential is in fact confidential, and not just



something that anyone who works in the industry would learn over time. Where is the line drawn?

*To enforce a non-competition agreement an employer has to prove it is reasonable in the circumstances.*

If an employee learns a certain strategy or process in the course of work, and then leaves for the competition, how practically can the employer address this? How does an employer who hires an employee directly from the competition practically protect itself from a lawsuit by the past employer who doesn't accept as coincidence the loss of established customers who follow the old employee?

The best practice is to focus on what you can control.

- Avoid having employees individually responsible for dealing with customers. Have teams of employees involved and so allow a familiar face to save the customer if an employee leaves.
- Keep confidential information secure. Don't allow unlimited access, particularly by anyone who doesn't need to know.
- Have reasonable written agreements, and so discourage inappropriate behaviour (an agreement which obviously is unenforceable is likely worthless).
- Fully explore whatever obligations a new employee has to



- a past employer, and protect yourself in writing with that employee. Take practical steps to ensure that breaches of such obligations don't happen, and are not reasonably perceived as happening.
- Consider what is essential for your workplace and each employee and act accordingly.
  - Revisit things from time to time, as the law and your circumstances may change.

Relying on a “standard” non-competition agreement is a false economy, and causes far more expensive problems down the road. ❖

## Labour and Employment Law



### Jeff Palamar

Direct Phone: 204.988.0364

Direct Fax: 204.953.7203

Email: [jpalamar@tmlawyers.com](mailto:jpalamar@tmlawyers.com)



**TAYLOR McCAFFREY LLP**  
BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

9th Floor, 400 St. Mary Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4K5  
[www.tmlawyers.com](http://www.tmlawyers.com)

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# “The Full Meal Deal”:

## Taking a Total Rewards Approach to Your Attraction, Retention, and Engagement Strategy

By Diane Panting

All components of your rewards offering interact with and impact employee perceptions of the attractiveness of your organization as a place to work. Like many “meals”, employment offerings can be quickly thrown together with little or no consideration of the individual parts and costs, or they can be carefully and thoughtfully planned to maximize attractiveness and perceived and real value – and ROI. The key is to consider the employment package strategically and holistically as an integrated program – the various components work in alignment and towards a common purpose that is articulated and understood. This means programs by design, not by default. So how does this occur? It begins with understanding.

*Even more so today – in changing, uncertain times – your organization needs people who will help your organization not only survive, but thrive.*

If your organization is like many, you are looking for the most ef-



fective ways to optimize the employment experience. This encompasses attracting, engaging and retaining the talent you need now and into the future. Even more so today – in changing, uncertain times – your organization needs people who will help your organization not only survive, but thrive. You need to have the right people doing the right things at the right times.

When you take a total rewards perspective to determining employment offerings, you direct the finite rewards dollars to the most effective and relevant employment offerings that align with your business strategy and culture. For example, in these challenging times we are seeing employers

offering more vacation time (unpaid) in order to avoid layoffs and holding the line on pay increases but continuing to strategically hire for the future.

Total rewards encompass all direct and indirect compensation and benefits that influence employee experience. The complete offering includes tools, services, programs, company culture, work environment, and leadership. All of these characteristics define what you offer your employees in support of your employee attraction, development, engagement, and retention efforts. This represents the whole picture – “the full meal deal”. There are three categories:



- Compensation – including base salary, short-term incentives, long-term incentives, retirement plans, death, survivor and disability benefits, health/dental/vision benefits.
- Individual growth – including performance management, lifestyle and recognition programs, succession and career planning, stretch opportunities.
- Environment – including values, ethical, authentic leadership, communication, health and safety, workplace culture.

A rewards program is impacted by:

- Internal influences which reflect your organizational culture (how the organization accomplishes what it does), business strategy (as required by the Board) and people strategy (as required by the business strategy to deliver on commitments)

- External influences including your organization’s reference market (both who you compete with for talent and your competitors for goods or services delivered), business climate (such as the current economic recession) and the social context (such as consumer demand for environmentally friendly products)

Ask yourself, “Do I know what is impacting and influencing our programs?” Ask the following questions of your leaders and encompass the answers when you design your program:

- What makes our organization attractive as an employer – what is our value proposition?
- Why do employees remain with us? Why do they leave?

- Are they engaged – how do you know? What data and facts do we have to support this?
- What encourages/discourages employees to perform and commit?
- What is our total rewards strategy? Is it there by design or default? Is it articulated and communicate?
- How does it support our business and customers?
- How do we measure the effectiveness of our total rewards offering?

Do you know the answers to these questions? If you do not, your “full meal deal” is not a real “value meal”. If you do know, go forth and make the best deal happen! ❖

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Diane A. Panting | Vice President  
Tel: 204.954.5512 | [diane.panting@aon.ca](mailto:diane.panting@aon.ca) | [www.aon.ca](http://www.aon.ca)

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# Contact Our Experts

**Jeff Palamar — Partner, Taylor McCaffrey LLP**

**T:** 204.988.0364  
**E:** [jpalamar@tmlawyers.com](mailto:jpalamar@tmlawyers.com)  
**W:** [www.tmlawyers.com](http://www.tmlawyers.com)



## **Winnipeg Office**

Taylor McCaffrey LLP  
9th Floor, 400 St. Mary Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 4K5

## **International**

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**Sherry Panciera — President, North Star Human Resources Inc.**



**T:** 204.294.9793  
**E:** [sherry@northstarhr.com](mailto:sherry@northstarhr.com)  
**W:** [www.northstarhr.com](http://www.northstarhr.com)

## **Winnipeg Office**

North Star Human Resources Inc.  
2 Sandstone Place  
East St. Paul, Manitoba, Canada  
R2E 0M3

## **US Office**

North Star Human Resources Inc.  
Unit 99  
5415 E. McKellips Road  
Mesa, Arizona 85215  
USA

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**Diane A. Panting — Vice President, Aon Consulting**

**T:** 204.954.5512  
**Toll free:** 1.800.863.9589  
**E:** [diane.panting@aon.ca](mailto:diane.panting@aon.ca)  
**W:** [www.aon.com](http://www.aon.com)



**Winnipeg Office**  
Aon Consulting  
One Lombard Place, Suite 1800  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
R3B 2A3

**Aon Headquarters**  
Aon Corporation  
200 East Randolph Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60601  
USA

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**Wendy Phaneuf — Managing Director, The Training Source**

**T:** 204.831.5078  
**E:** [wendy@thetrainingsource.ca](mailto:wendy@thetrainingsource.ca)  
**W:** [www.leadingforloyalty.com](http://www.leadingforloyalty.com)  
**W:** [www.thetrainingsource.ca](http://www.thetrainingsource.ca)



**Winnipeg Office**  
The Training Source  
Unit 25 - 308 Westwood Drive  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
R3K 1G7

**US Office**  
The Training Source  
50233 Venice Court  
Northville, Michigan 48168  
USA

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## Thriving In Changing Times



We hope the topics and issues touched upon in this publication are helpful to you as you consider new strategies for your organization during challenging or changing times. By successfully implementing the practical ideas, tips, and techniques put forward by our experts, you can create proactive results for your organization.

Feel free to pass *Survival of the Fittest* onto colleagues or associates within or outside of your organization that would find the information valuable.

If you have suggestions, feedback, or topics you'd like to learn more about, please email [contact@thetrainingsource.ca](mailto:contact@thetrainingsource.ca)