



YARDSTICK

Issue 4 • September 2020

MANAGEMENT & BUSINESS

**EXPANSION
DURING A PANDEMIC**

**IMPROVE EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT**

**PERSONALITY TYPES
IN THE WORKPLACE**

**THE MATH OF
PROFITABILITY**

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On the Cover Wade Laurent, co-owner of The Ultimate Deck Shop.

COVER PHOTO: TANDEM X VISUALS. LEFT: LIZ KOVACH. RIGHT: TANDEM X VISUALS.



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CHANGE OR DIE

... we [WRLA] will continue to evolve to ensure that we remain relevant to our customers – you, the member.

Change or die is the new motto in today's business world. Whether we're looking at how leaders guide their teams or how businesses run operations, it is clear that past methods and habits don't necessarily work in today's world.

Do you remember when preparing five to 10-year plans was the norm? With the advent and continued evolution of technology, two or three-year plans are now the trend as the rate of change has been speeding out of control. In the past we used to have a lot of time for planning and developing new ideas, but now we subscribe more to try often and fail fast, and if you're going to fail – fail cheap!

Inactivity leads to missed opportunities and as business leaders, it is imperative to keep two words in mind: courage and opportunity. Courage is required to explore new opportunities, particularly when there is a high level of uncertainty about the outcome. But embarking on these opportunities can help businesses grow. One of the many quotes I have on my office wall pertains to the comfort zone: "A comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing ever grows there." Stepping out of our comfort zone is how we can achieve personal and business growth.

As Babe Ruth is thought to have said – yesterday's home run won't win today's game. This quote hits home (pun intended) the message that past successes may not apply today. Relying on past successes will not help us tomorrow, and nothing has made that more apparent than this past year. Our experiences help shape who we are but in order to be effective, we need to be focused on today with an eye on tomorrow to ensure that we are relevant and sustainable.

The WRLA is in its 130th year and we have evolved over the years to be successful. And we will continue to evolve to ensure that we remain relevant to our customers – you, the member. It's what any business should do.



In this issue you will see how some members are growing, how technology advancements can help with the customer experience and how some personal reflection can help you advance your team and business.

No matter how you evolve, don't be afraid to make mistakes. Even Babe Ruth missed a few balls in his time.

Liz Kovach
PRESIDENT, WRLA



2020 has been a challenging year and we want to be able to share some good news stories in our upcoming 130th anniversary edition of the magazine. Tell us what the biggest challenge has been for you and your business this year, and how you successfully dealt with it.

Email marketing@wrla.org with your story.

WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH

THANK YOU TO THE 2020 SPONSORS OF OUR ANNUAL GOLF EVENTS IN SASKATOON & WINNIPEG.

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WINNIPEG SPONSORS

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CALGARY SUPPORTERS

While the Calgary golf tournament had to be cancelled, we were amazed at the generosity of our members who chose to donate sponsorship and/or registration fees back to the WRLA's education grants.

Thank you to:



Stan Burkholder
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ALL FUNDS
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PROGRAM.



See you all on the green in 2021!
wrla.org/golf

CORNERSTONES OF OUR COMMUNITIES

Small businesses are the cornerstones of our communities. Many of our towns and cities were built with materials that left through the doors of our small LBM stores. Throughout our lives, these storefronts and their employees, managers and owners have provided us with memories which are worth much more than anything they could have ever sold. Not only did these businesses provide us with trusted project advice, but often they served as meeting points or directional landmarks in our towns; they were places we visited as kids to sell our fundraiser chocolates; we proudly sported their names on our hockey or soccer jerseys after they selflessly sponsored our local teams; and they were places we went on Saturday morning with our parents to pick up “a couple things” for a weekend project.

As important as our businesses are to local communities, these communities are equally important to our businesses. In this day and age, when almost anything can be purchased online and delivered right to your door, it's more important now than ever to be present and visible within our areas! It is still, and always will be, our job as small business owners, to be the cornerstones of our communities. It is our job, when times are tough, to do what we can to instill confidence in those that support us. One does so by conveying our gratitude for support through giving back in the areas we live and work in.

I am issuing a challenge to all WRLA members for an upcoming issue of *Yardstick* – show us how you support your community! Show us what your shop, business or storefront means to your community. Send us pictures, write-ups and stories of how you have helped people, places or teams in your city, town or province, and how your community has helped you in return. We will include the submissions in *Yardstick*, as well as online.



Share your write-ups, pictures and recognition through your social media platforms (tag @wrlainc), post them on the WRLA accounts (/wrlainc) or email marketing@wrla.org.

I challenge every member to let our cities, towns and neighbourhoods know that we are the cornerstones of our communities, and are here to create new memories for the next generation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel Seibert'.

Joel Seibert
CHAIR, WRLA

I am issuing a challenge to all WRLA members... show us how you support your community! Show us what your shop, business and storefront means to your community. Send us pictures, write-ups and stories of how you have helped people, places or teams in your city, town or province, and how your community has helped you in return.

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WRLA NEWS

WHMIS MEETS GHS

To align with global standards, the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) has changed. Are your employees up to date?

For over 30 years, WHMIS has set the standard for hazard communication in Canada. In recent years, WHMIS has changed to align with the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. GHS is used worldwide by many of Canada's global trading partners, including the United States. This ensures a common set of rules for classifying hazardous products, as well as common rules for labels and a standard format for safety data sheets.

WHMIS training is legally required for all employees who are exposed or likely to be exposed to a hazardous material or controlled product at the workplace. Ensure your employees have up-to-date knowledge on how to protect themselves and their co-workers from hazardous products in the workplace.

This short 4-hour course is designed to familiarize employees with the WHMIS 2015 system, including GHS, and how it is used in workplaces.

Participants will learn:

- proper safety procedures to follow when using hazardous products
- hazard identification
- product classification
- product labeling

Upon successful completion, participants will be issued a WHMIS certificate (valid for two years).

Learn more: wrla.com/education

BENEFITS THAT WORK FOR YOU!

We have changed insurance providers to give you and your employees more offerings, services and flexibility. We are now partnered with Canada Life and PIB Insurance to bring you employee health and dental benefits that are designed specifically for WRLA members. PIB offers a full range of benefits and plans that can be customized to fit your budget and the needs of your employees. PIB has the ability to group multiple insurance providers in different ways to craft a plan that is unique to you and your company.

A few of the benefits include:

- pay direct drug card for all employees
- dental claims paid in “real time”
- \$5 million out-of-country coverage for all actively working employees

Plus, we negotiated an 8% savings! Take advantage of the volume discounts that come with being a part of WRLA's larger health and dental plan.



Contact Martin Kent, director of group marketing at PIB at (780) 465-9188 or 1-888-350-2077, or email martin.kent@pib.com.

VICTORY LAP

Thank you to everyone who participated in and sponsored our annual golf events. For obvious reasons that will remain unspoken, the events did not look the same as previous years, but those who came out still had a wonderful (and safe!) time. As always, the fun days in Winnipeg and Saskatoon were full of big laughs, good food and new friends. While the tournaments in Kenosha and Calgary were cancelled, we look forward to seeing everyone out in 2021 at all four locations.



DIRECTORY IS OUT



The much-coveted WRLA 2020-21 Directory & Product Source Guide is now out. If you didn't receive your copy, email Erin Lubinski, member services and solutions manager at erinl@wrla.org.

Additional copies are available to purchase. The directory is also available on the member portal of our website: membersarea.wrla.org (password: Connect@2021).

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

In case you didn't notice, *Yardstick* is shiny and new! We've changed everything from cover to cover, and we want to know your thoughts on the improvements. Answer a quick survey about the changes and you could win \$50 Visa gift card.



Take the survey: wrla.org/yardstick

Top: Tyler Dueck (Rona Rosenort), Curtis Farmer (Westman Steel), Greg Gardenits (Westman Steel) and Al Richter (Lac du Bonnet Home Hardware) won bragging rights as the top team in Winnipeg.

Bottom: Home boys of WRLA (a.k.a. dedicated board members) Joel Seibert (Mountain View Building Materials) and Wade Laurent (The Ultimate Deck Shop) had fun on the green.

PHOTOS: ERIN LUBINSKI

SHOWCASE 2021

Registration for the 2021 WRLA Building & Hardware Showcase is now open!

All retail members and exhibitors can register online for badges to attend the show.

Exhibitors can still book a booth but act fast as booth space is currently 70 percent full.

Register today:
wrla.org/winnipeg2021



SUPPORTING YOU!

Amidst COVID-19 and a busy summer, WRLA launched a support local campaign. From social media posts and posters for in-store use to media profiles and a Facebook ad campaign, we have been promoting the importance of supporting the local building supply industry to the general public. The campaign elements are also free to use to WRLA members. You can access the ad materials and add your own company logo to share/post or follow WRLA on social media and share our posts to your followers.

Do your part to promote the importance of supporting local! Email marketing@wrla.org for access to campaign materials.



THERE ARE ALSO ONLINE COURSES AVAILABLE YEAR-ROUND! LEARN MORE AT WRLA.ORG/EDUCATION

CLASSES ARE BACK IN SESSION

Fall means it's back to school. And while we know it may not look the same as previous years, we remain cautiously optimistic that in-person classes can take place. Our Principles of Yard & Warehouse Operations and Manual Estimating, level 1 (garages and decks) and level 2 (residential construction) courses will be held in Red Deer and Winnipeg.

In Red Deer: Week of October 26, 2020

In Winnipeg: Week of November 2, 2020

Register today: wrla.org/education

DUE FOR AN EXPANSION

WRLA is continually updating and expanding our educational offerings. We've added new courses and more are coming.

If you are passionate about professional development and education, and want to help shape industry training, contact member services and solutions manager, Erin Lubinski (erinl@wrla.org) to join our education committee today.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Email us at marketing@wrla.org or reach out via social media.



TEACHABLE TUESDAYS

Our fall schedule of webinars is going to provide some great information to help you and your business.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF LINKEDIN

September 15
Presented by Kelly Thibodeau of Squarely Social

SUPPLY CHAIN 101

September 29
Presented by Supply Chain Canada

HOW TO TAKE CONTROL & GROW SALES

October 6
Presented by Darrell Boyko of DominateSelling

CREATING SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR YOUR WORKPLACE

October 20
Presented by Charmaine Jennings of Strategic Charm

HOW TO CREATE CONTENT YOUR PEOPLE ARE SEARCHING FOR

November 3
Presented by Kelly Thibodeau of Squarely Social

SOCIAL MEDIA PREP FOR TRADE SHOWS

November 17
Presented by Charmaine Jennings of Strategic Charm

INVENTORY OPTIMIZATION

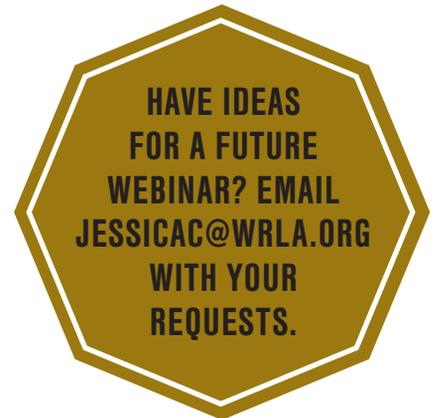
December 1
Presented by Supply Chain Canada

Register today: wrla.org/webinars

NEW WAY TO REACH YOUR CUSTOMERS

WRLA is now accepting sponsors of our monthly webinars. These popular webinars cover a range of business topics, from marketing to HR to industry trends. Sponsorship of a webinar would get your company name and logo out to decision makers while they are at work. Sponsorships are a valuable way to improve your visibility and enhance your company's profile.

For information about sponsorship packages, email jessicac@wrla.org



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MEMBER CORNER

 WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Email us at marketing@wrla.org or reach out via social media.



WRLA'S SUPPORT LOCAL CAMPAIGN



Over a dozen members have become a part of our “support your local building supply dealer” campaign. We’ve had great feedback and hope more members will share this valuable message! To share posts, follow us on social media. You can also get the campaign materials at no cost and then add your company’s logo to post and advertise with your customers directly.

Email marketing@wrla.org for access to campaign files.



wrlainc So great to get out and re-connect with members in person! @castlebldggroup @innattheforks #wrlaconnects

PROUD MOMENTS

Aveline, daughter of Derek Vine from Arcan Roofing & Cladding, loved being in the July 2020 issue of *Yardstick*. We wonder how happy this will make her...



Thank you for extending this offer to small businesses in the construction industry.

Debbie Wowk, Mill Trade Building Products Ltd.

CREDIT TO THE NEW BUILDING SCIENCE COURSE

As the importance of improving energy efficiency is quite evident in our industry, this course provides very relevant information in a well-organized manner. The WRLA has delivered some great and timely content here.

Eddie Choe, Trimlite

The greatest asset a building material supply company can have is a well-trained and educated staff. Continuing education is critical in our industry. With the ever changing requirements to meet energy efficient specifications, the course offered by WRLA and Sask Polytech is an excellent resource for the residential estimator.

Len Regier, Fries Tallman Lumber

Editor's note: You can learn more about this course at wrla.org/education.

“BUILD UP” Our Shop Local CAMPAIGN

WRLA's shop local public awareness campaign encourages customers to shop their local building supply store with a goal to drive traffic to member businesses and create a positive impact that will flow up through the industry's supply chain.

DO YOUR PART TO HELP BUILD UP OUR INDUSTRY AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

Ways you can get involved:

- Share WRLA's shop local posts. **Follow us on social media (/wrlainc).**
- Add your company's logo to the campaign and run ads, post on social media and promote in store. **(Email marketing@wrla.org to request access to the materials.)**
- Contact WRLA about adding additional elements or pieces to this valuable campaign and help it expand. **(Contact WRLA president, Liz Kovach at lkovach@wrla.org or 204-770-2416.)**





EXPANSION MEETS PANDEMIC

THE ULTIMATE DECK SHOP OPENS SECOND LOCATION

Wade Laurent

Opening a second location in the middle of a pandemic doesn't come with a procedural manual unfortunately. In fall 2019, Shane Chapman and I made the decision to expand our business, The Ultimate Deck Shop, by opening a store in Saskatoon, as well as to move our Regina location to a bigger yard.

In January 2020, we had a location in Saskatoon secured with four months to completely outfit the store and build a team. No big deal, right? We were ready to attack the expansion, the move and the 2020 season. And then... COVID hit.

STAY CALM. BUT PANIC AT THE SAME TIME.

I know we were not alone in thinking summer 2020 was going to be very bleak. Nailed it! Except exactly the opposite of how we thought it was going to go. We called suppliers and asked if we could return product or cancel orders, we asked for longer terms, and we just asked for help because we had no idea what was about to happen. Our worst fears were confirmed when spring took an extra month to arrive. We had the

worst April in our five-year history. I know it's not a long history but imagine: we've opened a new location, took on debt, added four full-time employees and the month that is supposed to give us some confidence in the decisions we are making turns out to be a record low. Luckily as a small business owner I already don't like sleeping because there was not much of that.

We tried to manage our team with total transparency. We told them what we took on for debt and the sales targets we needed to keep the wheels turning and showed them our expenses. That transparency took us out of our comfort zone, but the response we got made our team stronger. They appreciated the honesty and if I could do it all over again, I would do the same.

Further into the season, the biggest struggle was not demand but supply. If I reflect back on it, I think it is easy to see now that supply was going to be an issue but I don't think anyone thought demand was going to be quite like this. We are trying to manage customers' expectations because when they are ready to spend, they want their product and they don't want to wait.

We have a huge opportunity to make some money and – let's be honest, that's why we are all here. So, let's get after it, let's supply, let's make money and let's hope we get another year of strong sales while this pandemic holds on because I, for one, will be on a plane when that becomes a viable option and our customers are no different than us.

We are all doing the same thing: We are all struggling our way through a pandemic and we are in a situation where we can all make some money. We should. And I know there are other industries that are suffering but we cannot control that; we can only control what we do. Get the products that you can and sell them for what the market will bare. You can be sure that your competition is making money and the box stores are not worried about what people think about them. Manage the opportunity.

Above: The second location of The Ultimate Deck Shop opened in Saskatoon during the COVID-19 pandemic.

IF YOU'RE NOT LEARNING NEW THINGS, YOU'RE FALLING BEHIND



Stay on top of industry trends and requirements, and save money on costly errors with improved knowledge and skills from a host of courses available through the Western Retail Lumber Association (WRLA).

COURSES AVAILABLE:

- Principles of Yard & Warehouse Operations
- Manual Estimating (three levels)
- Online Estimating, Level 1
- Math Refreshers
- NEW! WHMIS-GHS
- NEW! Building Science & Energy Efficiency Awareness

BUILDING SCIENCE & ENERGY EFFICIENCY AWARENESS:

Gain a better understanding of how buildings work with a solid grounding in the fundamentals of building science, from air movement and moisture management to energy-efficient windows and doors. This course will also get you up-to-speed on National Building Code requirements for new buildings, additions and major alterations.



Find courses for you and your team:
wrla.org/education

IF YOU'RE NOT A SQUEAKY WHEEL, YOU'RE NOT GETTING HEARD!

Liz Kovach

One of the key lessons I have learned on our journey of advocacy is that if you're not a squeaky wheel, government will ignore you. Lately, I've been feeling like we're stalking the government because of the volume of communication that the WRLA has been putting forward to generate some form of acknowledgement and responses from provincial and federal governments. We've had to get passed this awkward feeling though as inactivity results in missed opportunities and we must continue to ensure our voice is being heard.

In addition to advocating to government on behalf of the industry, we also launched a support local campaign this summer to reach the general public. We have been asking members to engage with the campaign by sharing posts, adding your logo or posting it in stores – because if consumers are NOT being told to support local, it is all too easy to order from large online companies. Please engage with our support local campaign as we designed this to support you, our members. (Email marketing@wrla.org to get involved.)

On the national front, the Building Material Council of Canada (BMCC) recently commissioned an economic impact study to better understand the impact a home renovation tax credit (HRTC) would have on our economy as a recovery strategy, in addition to meeting ongoing climate strategy objectives. The potential success of this initiative is evident. This report makes the case that a new HRTC would:

- **Help Canadians invest in their homes.** 4.5 million dwellings require minor or major repairs including energy retrofits.



- **Help rejuvenate the Canadian economy.** The 2009 home renovation tax credit led to a major boost in home renovations with renovation spending being the only major component of the GDP that grew in 2009, and it can do the same now.
- **Support good paying construction jobs.** If every Canadian household spent just \$500 on average on repair construction, it would support 93,000 jobs across Canada.
- **Support key export sectors at a time of weak international demand.** As a result of COVID-19, construction materials exports from Canada have declined by as much as 50 percent (depending on the commodity). A boost in construction at home would help offset these declines.
- **Support national climate change objectives.** Energy efficiency and other carbon emission reduction investments could be a primary objective of the tax credit program.
- **Boost tax revenues for government.** It would generate more construction activity and bring the underground cash economy into the formal economy.
- **And it can be done safely.** The home renovation sector is one industry for which it is easier to support physical distancing and sanitation without a large cost burden on the sector or considerable efforts on the part of the homeowner.

Read the full report online (wrla.org/advocacy).

I believe our industry has a large role to play in economic recovery and to help, the WRLA will continue to push the support local message and need for renovation tax credits to the public and governments. I urge you to do the same!

FIND YOUR CUSTOMERS HERE



IF YOU ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS, YOU NEED TO MARKET YOUR BUSINESS.

During tough economic times, cutting advertising can actually hurt your business. Study after study shows that companies who continued to market effectively and stayed the course came out the strongest on the other side.

“Advertising is Muscle, NOT Fat!”

If you want to reach the building supply industry in Western Canada, our members are the perfect fit. The Western Retail Lumber Association (WRLA) represents more than 1,100 firms in the building supply industry in Northwestern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon. Our readers are decision makers - CEOs, presidents, vice-presidents, owners and buyers.



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SUCCESSION PLANNING

3 SIMPLE STEPS TO YOUR FUTURE SUCCESS

Diane Taylor

Imagine this workplace scenario: Your plate is full and you're stressing over how to get everything done when one of your best and brightest employees hands in their two weeks' notice. You try to counter offer, but they say the new opportunity not only pays slightly more, but it also offers an innovative leadership development program and a clearly defined career progression path. You have spent the last five years teaching this employee about the business and hoped they would step into the next available leadership role.

Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon reality. However, it doesn't have to happen if you proactively protect your business by ensuring you have effective people practices in place, including a succession plan.

Succession planning is something many put on the back burner because they are dealing with the current pressing issues in their business. However, as soon as you lose just one key employee, your failure to be proactive in succession planning will not only add an additional pressing issue, it will be costly. Recruitment, training time, lost knowledge and valuable customer relationships are significant direct and indirect costs associated with turnover. Now instead of having time to strategically plan the next phase of business growth, you will be set back trying to replace and train another key employee.

Succession planning is a necessary investment to protect your business from disruptive setbacks caused from turn over and unprepared employees stepping into new roles. It is the bridge that creates consistency and a profitable forward momentum.

Here are three simple steps to get you started:

1 ORGANIZATIONAL OUTLOOK

Look at your organizational structure. For each position in your organization identify two or more possible replacements for each role within your team.

2 GAP ANALYSIS

For each of the identified employees that may be a future fit, identify what is currently holding them back from stepping into that role today. What hard and soft skills are they needing to develop to be ready? What is the expected time frame for them to be ready?

3 EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING PLANS

Use the gap analysis to develop a training plan for each of the identified employees. You will want to ensure that your employee development plans provide time and mentorship within your workplace. Also be sure to balance training of product knowledge and skills with emotional intelligence. The thing holding most employees back from the next step is the confidence and ability to lead others, rather than a lack of job processes or product knowledge.

The final step should be completed in collaboration with the employee. When employers fail to communicate their succession plans for an employee, they fail to utilize one of the key engagement and retention levers – nurturing career development.

Don't delay! Start your succession planning now. It is the perfect way to proactively plan and stabilize your long-term growth, sustainability and profitability.

Diane Taylor of Glow Leadership is a strategic HR consultant, executive coach and leadership development facilitator. Contact Diane today at diane@glowleadership.com to see how she can help your organization shine brighter.

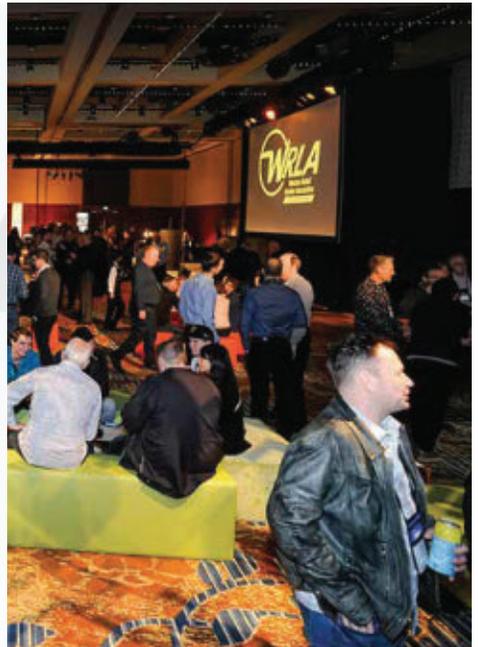
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Cloverdale Paint

IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT. IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS.

Jolene Watson

According to an engagement study recently released by Psychometrics Canada Ltd, only 44.2 percent of Canadian companies measure employee engagement. Yet without effective engagement, leaders may struggle with motivating others, selling change and getting buy-in, low morale and high staff turnover.

While disengaged staff have a negative impact on business, engaged staff can have a positive impact, including increased productivity, increased revenue, lower absenteeism, higher retention and a stronger sense of loyalty.

Engaged team members want:

1. Control over their work
2. Opportunity to use their skills
3. Clear expectations
4. Opportunity to share their ideas and opinions

While this does require trust and flexibility, particularly when it comes to control over their work, the benefits reaped will help everyone.

Setting expectations is extremely important in the beginning and autonomy must be given in order for someone to truly feel empowered. If we are unclear about our expectations, we will constantly be disappointed. Think about the last time you were disappointed in someone: did you ask if they needed help? Did you make sure they had the resources and time required to complete the project or task? Was there an open line of communication?

I attribute my speaking and coaching career to an incredible leader who paid for my Myers-Briggs® certification and then became my mentor when I decided to go back to business school to launch Clarity Coaching & Development (also his idea). While working for him, he created a score card template that had me rate my most important needs and wants in my role, which then automated an overall happiness score out of 100 percent. He asked for feedback on his management skills so we could work more cohesively as a team and was always open to considering new ideas in regards to my role and the overall direction of the company. He saw potential in me and I will never forget that.

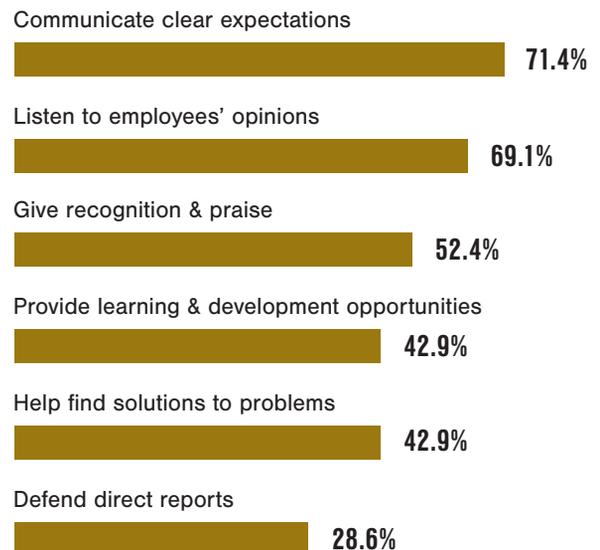
Sometimes a leader must let an employee move on or into a new role to truly help them strengthen their natural skill sets. What intrinsically motivates someone must be discovered! A deep intrinsic understanding of what motivates each individual employee is the key to moving your team forward. A person who feels appreciated will almost always do more than what is expected!



It may seem cliché to say leadership is about the people we lead but it is true. Sometimes leaders need to shed their excessive need to be themselves and learn how to adapt their behaviours and communication styles to those around them.

Jolene Watson, president of Clarity Coaching & Development, is a professional speaker and trainer, and MBTI certified practitioner. Learn more about her services at jolenewatson.com.

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THE NEW RETAIL LANDSCAPE

Marc Leblanc



Retail is going through a rapid and dramatic transformation. Even in this complex and uncertain context, busy consumers increasingly make decisions based on how fast they can buy and receive their purchases. When retailers question how they are going to fulfill these high expectations, the answer is all about technology and convenience. Now more than ever, businesses must become progressive to keep up with innovative brands and customers' demands. Forging ahead, retailers must look towards investments in technology to enable a seamless omnichannel customer experience.

1 STAY AHEAD OF THE "NOW CULTURE"

What can retailers do to integrate their business into the "now culture" and service consumers wanting instant gratification?

Having an e-commerce platform or an app is essential to provide the level of direct and anytime access customers expect. From the retailer operations perspective, managing both a physical and digital presence requires an omnichannel retail solution that can also support services such as real-time cross-channel access to inventory data and on-shelf product availability.

Additionally, to create a cohesive multi-channel experience, retailers require solutions that enable them to present and update inventory in real time, and restock efficiently. Retailers must also deliver on logistics and speed by offering flexible fulfillment options such as buy online, pickup in store (BOPIS), ship from store, easy returns and convenient delivery.

The omnichannel customer experience is not complete without offering multiple, fast and easy payment methods. It is essential to provide a variety of payment options through digital wallet platforms such as Google Pay and Apple Pay, online financial platforms like PayPal, and instalment solutions like Afterpay.

2 NEW WAYS TO MARKET & ENGAGE

The omnichannel universe offers valuable opportunities to draw in new customers and interact with current customers by keeping them engaged. Marketing through social shopping by leveraging social platforms such as Instagram can help create an immersive storefront that takes buyers from your shoppable posts directly to your website in one tap.

Today's consumer is looking for a seamless experience that feels personalized to their specific needs. The holistic approach of sharing stories and featured products through organic posts can create that unique experience that inspires your customers to share what they have discovered.

3 SUPPLY CHAIN TECHNOLOGY

Achieving the new customer service standard of convenience could be a challenge without a smart and nimble supply chain. Leverage technological tools available: The latest retail management systems can automate warehousing and transportation operations, along with automated replenishments, which can save time and costs for retailers and consumers.

A reliable supply chain is the cornerstone of accurate inventory management. Accessing a global inventory management system that consolidates stock, provides speed and efficiency tracking stock, improved ability to move assets faster, and avoids overstocking is key. By adopting newer technology, you can leverage data to optimize the supply chain and mitigate disruptions.

Marc Leblanc is the vice president of ACCEO Home, Garden and Building Supply Solutions. With over 1,000 clients, ACCEO provides custom solutions to meet the complex demands of home and building supply businesses with four cutting-edge applications: ACCEO Omni, ACCEO OGC, ACCEO Profitmaster and ACCEO Ogasys. ACCEO's end-to-end business management solutions are designed to improve day-to-day operations for business of all sizes – serving the wholesale and retail market segments. Learn more: transaxion.ca



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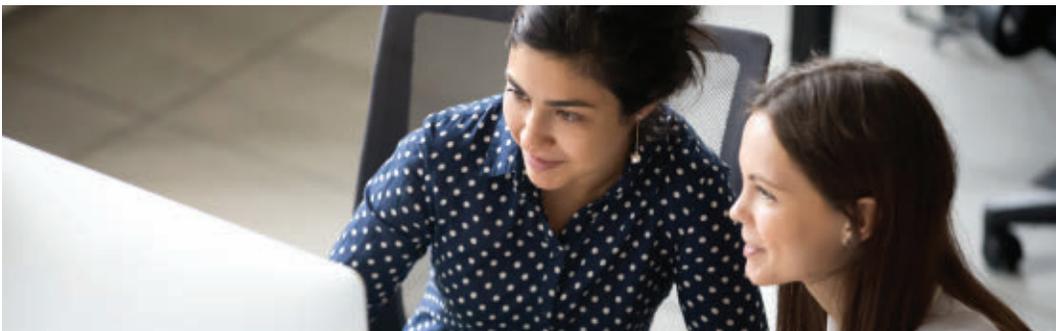


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HELPING HANDS

HOW INTERNS & COMPANIES CAN HELP EACH OTHER

Gina Aiello



Most of us have been there – that awkward time between school and career. Time and again, experiential learning helps students bridge the gap between education and career. Internships or co-ops can open doors, build confidence and allow students to apply their skills to real-world projects within an organization and gain practical hands-on work experience.

For employers, offering an internship serves as an introduction to the emerging market of top talent. Students graduating from college or university might be branching out into a second career, some are new to Canada, while others are aligning a degree with a diploma and applied studies. The talent pool is vast. Graduates have the latest and greatest “toolbox” within their industry and are eager to apply their knowledge and bring fresh ideas.

This year, more than ever, companies are experiencing strain and stress at work, so the thought of mentoring a student intern can be daunting, but this might actually be the best time. It may also seem like a challenge to carve out a role for the student – something that’s meaningful and worthwhile for both parties, but often, if we just stop to think about it, there are some obvious solutions. Have you put a project on hold due to staffing limitations? Is

there a current project that could use an extra set of hands? Are there any projects that you keep pushing aside because you just can’t get to them? Consider tasks that were halted due to COVID-19 and have a student intern cross that off the ever-growing to-do list. Consider your peak periods and year-end demands – what do you often wish you could do during that time with some extra hands? Maybe there’s a research or strategy opportunity that will give you valuable information.

It’s imperative that companies do not just see interns as free labour and have them doing mindless tasks, but rather see this as an opportunity to help one another out. It’s a smart and cost-effective business decision to look at internships or co-ops offered through local universities or colleges. With a large number of Canada’s workforce retiring in the next ten years, attracting and retaining qualified, skilled and experienced candidates may be a challenge. But a stable workforce is one built through growth, personal development and succession planning, which all aligns with the benefits of an internship!

Gina Aiello is the internship coordinator for The University of Winnipeg’s Professional, Applied and Continuing Education. pace.uwinnipegcourses.ca

WAYS TO MAKE IT WORK

To ensure your company and the student intern all benefit, follow these tips to make it work.

- **Provide valuable learning experiences.** Engage them in projects and the workplace, including meetings (yes, they want to go to meetings!). This will ensure the internship is more beneficial for you as well.
- **Dedicate a staff member to provide guidance.** A mentor can provide interns with constructive feedback while also giving a staff member the opportunity to gain management skills.
- **Engage interns from various programs.** From HR and supply chain management to communications and marketing, there are a variety of internships. It will provide fresh ideas and new insights across your business and benefit all departments.

$$4 + 6 = 10$$





THE STRAIGHT GOODS

ON THE **MATH** OF
PROFITABILITY

Donald Cooper

Most businesses, including some very large ones, simply do not understand the math of profitability... and it's killing them. They don't understand that small improvements in pricing, sales and efficiency will have a huge impact on their bottom line. Sometimes their accountants don't even understand this important stuff.

So here, in the form of three questions are the straight goods on the math of profitability. The numbers I'm showing here, are averages. You'll need to do the specific math for your business, but you'll be amazed at what you discover.





1 WHAT WOULD BE THE BOTTOM-LINE IMPACT OF INCREASING YOUR PRICES BY JUST FIVE PERCENT?

In most business, a five-percent price increase could improve the bottom line by 50 to 80 percent. Are you so good at what you do that nobody would even notice, or care, if you increased prices by just five percent? Is your total value and customer experience so compelling that price isn't as big an issue as you think it is? If you're not that good, what three or four things do you need to do spectacularly well to become that good and when will you start? No other single action in your business will grow your bottom line as much as this.

If a five-percent price increase is too much, what about three percent or two percent? What's holding you back from doing this? Is it that you're mediocre? Is it that you think it's all about price when it's actually about compelling value and extraordinary experiences? Or do you just have an entitlement problem that's holding you back and hurting your bottom line? Price resistance is often between our own ears and not in the marketplace. Nobody will ever think you're worth more than you do. Funny how that works!

2 WHAT WILL BE THE BOTTOM-LINE IMPACT OF INCREASING SALES BY JUST FIVE PERCENT (AS LONG AS YOU DON'T BLOW YOUR BRAINS OUT WITH RECKLESS DISCOUNTING, COUPONING OR EXTRAVAGANT ADVERTISING EXPENSES TO ACHIEVE THAT INCREASE)?

In most businesses, just five percent more sales, properly managed, will improve the bottom line by 25 to 40 percent.

What three or four things can you do spectacularly well that would turn customers into fans who will help boost sales by five percent simply by telling others about you? Remember, customers give you business; fans help you grow your business. How might you improve your sales training, customer response times, merchandise selection or presentation, policies, website or your value message in a way that will increase sales by five percent?

Heck, why shoot for just five percent. If you're truly going to be that much better at what you do and how you treat customers, why not go for 10 percent more sales? By the way, the easiest way to increase sales by 10 to 15 percent in most businesses is to make sure that your existing customers know about all the ways that you can be helpful to them. They already know you and trust you and know how to find you. Do you have a database of existing customers? How can you use that to communicate with them, coach them and remind them? If you're at all like the hundreds of businesses that I've worked with over the years, 90 percent of your target customers are not aware of all the value you offer. And that's your fault, not theirs.

CALCULATING

PROFIT

3 HOW WOULD REDUCING EXPENSES BY JUST FIVE PERCENT GROW YOUR BOTTOM LINE?

In most businesses, a five-percent reduction in expenses will improve the bottom line by 20 to 25 percent.

What three or four things could you do to operate more efficiently in each part of your business without diluting the customer experience or the employment experience for your team? How could you work smarter? How could you improve systems and processes to get it right the first time, every time? Who are your top 10 product and services suppliers? How could you negotiate with them for better prices, terms or offerings? Ask everyone on your team how you can operate more efficiently.

So, there they are – the three approaches to improving profitability in your business.

Create “idea fests” three times a year where each employee will be responsible to bring at least one idea to improve efficiency, operate more safely, add value or serve customers more wonderfully. Your staff knows stuff and they hate it when you don’t ask.

Now the question is, what would be the impact on your bottom line if you could actually do all three of these things at the same time? What reality checks, changed thinking, decisions, passion, commitments and specific actions would that require? And, if you could double or triple your bottom line next year, would it be worth it?

One last thought: For every decision you make and action that you commit to take, determine specifically what will be done, by whom, by when, measured how and rewarded how. Document the commitments and then follow up. The world is run by those who make specific commitments and then follow up.

Donald Cooper, MBA, has been both a world-class manufacturer (Cooper Sporting Goods) and an award-winning retailer. Now, as a Toronto-based international management speaker and coach, he helps business owners and managers rethink, refocus and re-energize their business to sell more, manage smarter, grow their bottom line... and have a life. Donald can be reached at donald@donaldcooper.com. To sign up for Donald's free, weekly two-minute 'straight talk' management blog, go to donaldcooper.com.



THE SERVICE CHALLENGE AUDIT SHEET

WHAT MIGHT BE PREVENTING US FROM DELIVERING EXTRAORDINARY CUSTOMER-OWNING SERVICE & EXPERIENCES?

Failure to deliver extraordinary customer service and experiences is generally caused by some of the underlying factors listed below. Have each leader, manager, supervisor and 20 percent of your front-line staff take just four minutes to complete this audit sheet by putting 'X' in the box beside each item that might need addressing in your

business. Analyze the results to look for insights on what needs fixing. Then, determine what action will be taken, by whom, by when, measured how and rewarded how.

Note: Point 16 is specifically for retailers only. All other 'Audit Sheet' points below apply to any type of business.

- 1 We lack a real passionate commitment to customers at the top of our organization. We talk about service but it's mostly just talk.
- 2 Negative attitudes about customers that prevail throughout our business.
- 3 We don't know enough about what our customers really need or want or how they feel.
- 4 We don't provide the coaching that our customers need to wisely choose and effectively use what we sell.
- 5 We have no clear and effectively communicated service mission, service standards or measurement of service delivery in our business.
- 6 Lack of well-communicated standards of appearance, performance and behaviour.
- 7 Absence of clear processes and systems that create a consistent and efficient customer experience.
- 8 Poor supervision, ineffective supervisors or not enough regular supervision.
- 9 Not hiring people with the required knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- 10 Lack of effective ongoing training regarding product knowledge, systems or procedures.
- 11 We're understaffed.
- 12 High staff turnover, which results in staff not having the product and customer knowledge they need.
- 13 Some of our products or services are not right for our target customers or don't perform as promised.
- 14 Some of our physical facilities, equipment or technology limit our ability to serve wonderfully.
- 15 Our salespeople or advertising make some promises that we cannot or do not deliver.
- 16 Poor signage, pricing info or store layout confuses and stresses customers. Or our store is old looking.
- 17 Our website is out-of-date, cluttered or difficult to navigate. Our contact info online is vague and frustrating.
- 18 Lack of a customer database that enables us to proactively serve regular customers as individuals.
- 19 Some of our policies frustrate, stress and alienate our customers.
- 20 Our staff are not empowered to make decisions that will serve customers quickly and effectively.
- 21 Lack of recognition, rewards and appreciation for our service team. They're demoralized and it's management's fault.
- 22 We don't respond to customer complaints or problems quickly or honestly.
- 23 Some aspect of our pricing, billing or invoicing is unclear, misleading or manipulative.
- 24 We don't deal effectively with staff who choose not to deliver our service promise.

Now that we've identified what our real service issues are, what needs to be done to fix these? Specifically who will do what, by when, measured how? Who will follow up and how will we acknowledge and reward success?

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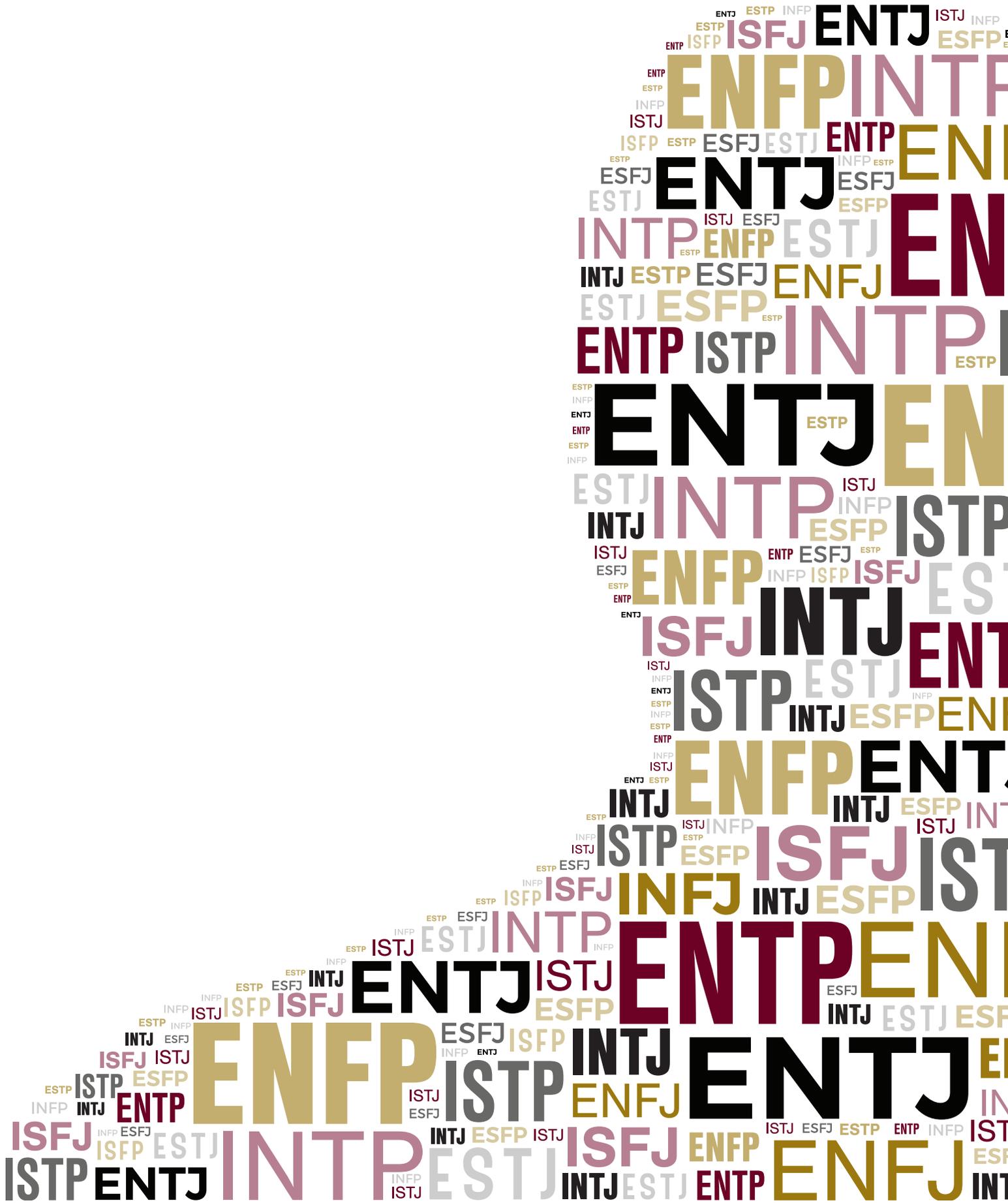
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PERSONALITY TYPES IN THE WORKPLACE

KNOWING & WORKING WITH DIFFERING PERSONALITIES

Jolene Watson

In life there is the golden rule – treat others as you want to be treated. But then there is the platinum rule – treat others the way THEY want to be treated. Everyone is different – and that’s not a bad thing, but it does result in people wanting to be treated differently based on their personality and preferences. In the workplace, differences can create balance, offer new perspectives and diversify the team. And while varying personalities can result in conflict, it can be mitigated with understanding and respect.

Knowing the personality types of you and your team has numerous benefits, including enhanced communication, improved customer service, increased innovation and efficiency, improved decision making and boosts in morale.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI) is a preferred personality test around the world and is used by 88 percent of Fortune 100 companies. The tool is based on renowned Swiss psychologist Carl Jung’s theories and the model/questionnaire was developed by Katharine Briggs and her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers.

Personality preferences are a way of classifying a person’s natural tendencies and choices. You may exhibit behaviours of both sides on a daily basis but you will naturally prefer one to the other.



Based on MBTI, there are four personality preference areas that create each person's personality:

- Extroversion or Introversion: Focus of attention
- Intuition or Sensing: Information input
- Feeling or Thinking: Decision making
- Judging or Perceiving: Lifestyle

1 EXTROVERSION & INTROVERSION

This preference area of personality type refers to how we gain our energy. Extroverts are energized by the outside world and by being around others; they often enjoy talking things out and tend to think out loud. Introverts are more energized by their inner worlds and reflections, and often need more time to contemplate ideas before sharing them with others. Extroverts tend to communicate by talking while introverts often prefer texting or emailing. As we age and mature, we often develop behaviours on each side, however Jung believes that we are one or the other innately.

2 SENSING & INTUITION

Before we make a decision, we have a favourite way of gathering information. Those with a sensing preference tend to gather details, statistics and facts that they must confirm by experience; they tend to focus on 'what is.' They trust their experience and may not be open to new ideas without first seeing the research. On the other hand, those with intuitive preferences tend to trust their gut feeling more often and focus on associations, possibilities and 'what could be' scenarios. They trust inspiration and often live in the future of possibilities. In my experience, those who prefer intuition thrive on change and new opportunities. They will often approach team meetings with a wide variety of new ideas or theories they want to try, which is not always well received by those that prefer sensing as they want to have facts and research in place before they will consider anything new. This can cause conflict when it comes to project management.

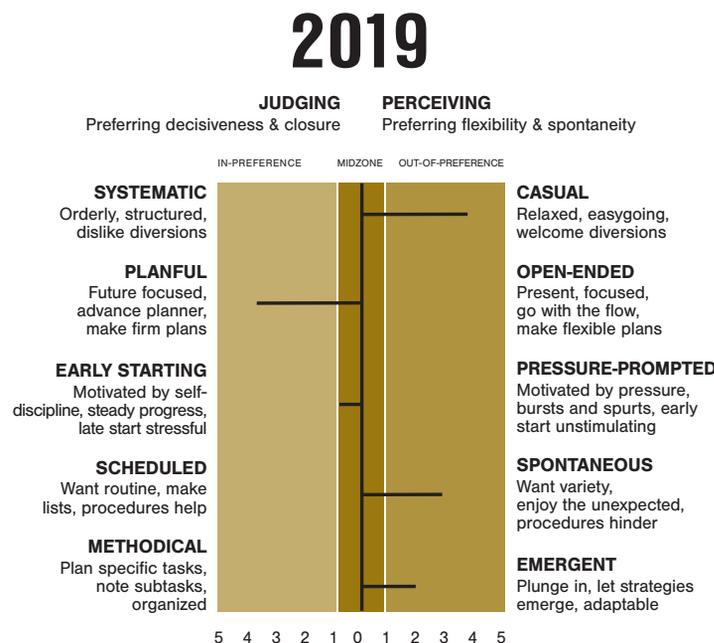
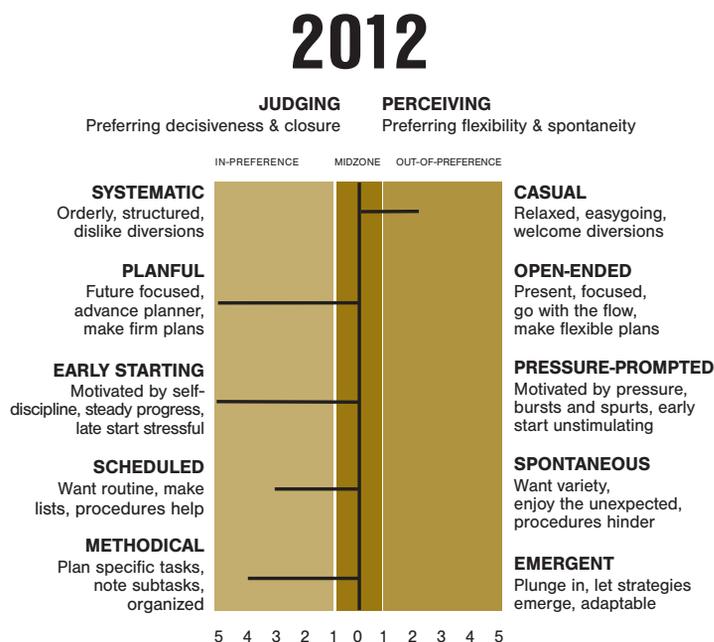
3 THINKING & FEELING

This area refers to how we make decisions. Thinkers make decisions based on logic, analysis and are brilliant with strategy; they often find it easier to look at a situation objectively. Feelers make their decisions based on personal values and often look at a situation in a subjective way by trying to understand the needs, emotions and feelings of those involved. This area tends to cause occasional conflict in the workplace and in personal relationships due to the different areas of focus.

4 JUDGING & PERCEIVING

Are you more spontaneous or a planner by nature? This area refers to how you approach the outside world. Individuals with a preference for judging tend to be planful, systematical and enjoy completing and organizing tasks. Perceivers act more in a spontaneous way and enjoy having flexibility in their plans, which often leads to increased adaptability.

Personality type does not change, but your behaviours definitely can! I prefer judging – I absolutely love making a plan, living in a systematical way and being scheduled. My natural personality preferences served me well in the past in terms of achieving top grades and having everything organized. (I was a bit of a perfectionist to say the least.) When I became an entrepreneur, however, I soon realized that being spontaneous, emergent and more flexible would be required to succeed. I practiced the behaviours of a perceiver for many years and now, as you can see in this comparison chart, I am much more spontaneous, emergent and pressure prompted.





Personally and professionally, there are so many useful applications of knowing your personality type, including but not limited to:

- Self-understanding/awareness
- Career options/development
- Leadership development
- Team building
- Customer service
- Change and stress management
- Presentation and networking skills

1 SELF-UNDERSTANDING & CAREER OPTIONS

I have always been passionate about psychology and helping others achieve their full potential. When I was managing a natural resources company in 2012, my boss suggested I get my Myers-Briggs personality profiling done prior to my performance review. We discovered we were very similar in type except the feeling and thinking preference, and in fact, that area did cause some conflict between us and I had even considered giving my notice. Once he realized I was of the feeling preference, he changed his leadership style to adapt to my needs. He also paid for my MBTI certification with Psychometrics Canada Ltd. and changed my role from business manager to client relationship manager – a role better suited to my feeling preference.

Finding or creating a career that is in line with your natural preferences and strengths is extremely rewarding. For example, a large percentage of engineers are of the introversion and thinking preferences while most speakers are of the extroversion and feeling preferences. Knowing your personality type can be an incredible asset when choosing careers in order to choose a profession you will find enjoyable and fulfilling. This also allows strong leaders to help their team find the careers that best fit their own personality types and help with succession planning throughout the organization.

2 TEAM BUILDING

Knowing the types of your team members can truly impact how you communicate with each other and train new employees. An example of how to accommodate both introverts and extroverts in team meetings would be to provide agendas ahead of time and allow for brainstorming during the meeting. I also suggest allowing 24 hours for feedback and final decisions after the meeting to accommodate introverted team members. Extroverts often like to make a final decision during the meeting and tend to move on very quickly, but this approach may not be effective for those that need more time to process the information provided.

3 CHANGE & STRESS MANAGEMENT

During COVID, this topic has come up a lot. Did you know that under acute stress we can actually flip our personality type? It is natural to develop strengths around the preference areas of your personality type and to avoid other areas or behaviours. But the least preferred area of our personality can actually surface under great stress – and often inappropriately! For example, extroverts may become aloof and shut off communication from others while introverts may speak out often and loudly, or thinkers may have emotional outbursts while feelers may become very critical and despair will often take over quickly. The MBTI stress management report gives strategies and customized resources for each of the 16 personality types. A great strategy for extroverts is to allow them to talk about a difficult situation immediately and make sure you allow them time to talk it through. Introverts need time to process information and come up with feedback, so giving them 24 hours' notice is a great way to allow them to collect their thoughts and articulate what they need. Having each team member talk about their stressors and how others can help them get back to balance is a great meeting idea, especially when a change is about to be introduced.

4 PRESENTATION & NETWORKING SKILLS

I facilitate courses with a focus on engaging an audience as well as being extremely charismatic when meeting others at networking events. I recently had the honour of facilitating a networking webinar for the WRLA. In terms of engaging someone of your opposite type, you must be able to quickly adapt to their preferred communication styles. For example, I am an intuitive feeler (NF) and as such I tend to focus on values and explaining the big picture, often using metaphors and switching topics often. When I am talking to someone of the sensing and thinking preferences (ST), I give facts, details and statistics, and talk in a linear pattern. I stick to one topic and expect the person in front of me to debate my ideas. It shows a great amount of respect to be flexible in your approach, but it has huge benefits personally and professionally.

Understanding your personality type and how to quickly assess others is a great way to quickly develop rapport with others.

You can't change your personality type, but you can always change your behaviours.

Jolene Watson, president of Clarity Coaching & Development, is a professional speaker and trainer, and MBTI-certified practitioner. Learn more about MBTI and her services at jolenewatson.com.

MAKING DECISIONS

In the workplace, teams consisting of individuals with similar communication styles work together more easily and may arrive at a decision more quickly, while teams with differing communication styles take more time to make decisions but may produce outcomes of better quality. Decisions will be stronger if all of the perspectives are included:

E: Share information and discuss.

T: Analyze by likely outcomes.

I: Reflect and then talk.

F: Evaluate by values and relationships.

S: Identify facts and realities.

J: Make a plan.

N: Generate possibilities.

P: Open to changing the plan.

MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR



FOCUS OF ATTENTION



Extraversion

Energized by people and things in the external world.

Introversion

Energized by ideas or impressions in the inner world.



INFORMATION INPUT



Sensing

Gather details and facts that can be confirmed by experience.

Intuition

Gather ideas and see future possibilities.



DECISION MAKING



Thinking

Make decisions by logic and analysis.

Feeling

Make decisions based on personal values.



LIFESTYLE



Judging

Enjoy planning and deciding.

Perceiving

Enjoy remaining open to new options.

Source: [psychometrics.com](https://www.psychometrics.com)



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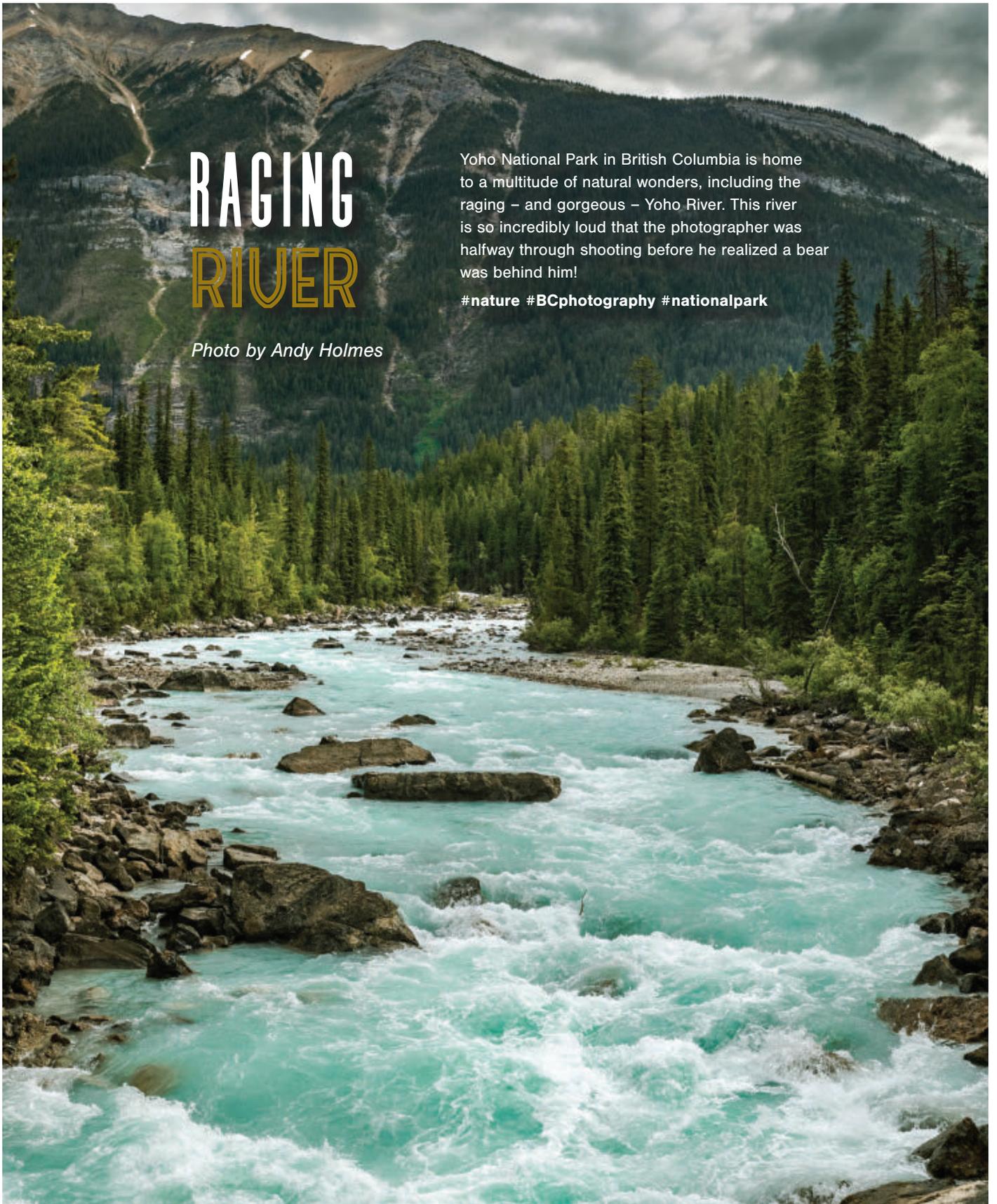


RAGING RIVER

Photo by Andy Holmes

Yoho National Park in British Columbia is home to a multitude of natural wonders, including the raging – and gorgeous – Yoho River. This river is so incredibly loud that the photographer was halfway through shooting before he realized a bear was behind him!

#nature #BCphotography #nationalpark



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