

Canadian HR Reporter  
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## Top 25 HR Professionals (2017)



Canadian HR Reporter names Canada's top human resources practitioners

We looked... and we found — the top 25 human resources practitioners across Canada. From corporate culture and strategic labour relations to gender equity, health and safety, and mentorship, they had HR covered.

### **Evert Akkerman**

#### **XNL HR**

Once again, Evert Akkerman, owner and principal consultant at XNL HR in Newmarket, Ont., has had a fulfilling year. He did a review of job descriptions with one municipality, along with assisting in

a job evaluation and writing a communication plan for the streamlining of two departments. At another company, Evert created an employee manual and went on a road show with the controller to present the new policy to employees. He also helped with renewal of the benefits plan. And at a third employer, he suggested the launch of a co-op program to attract skilled talent in a competitive field, with four universities getting involved, and multiple applications from students.

## **Laurie Armstrong**

### **Prophix Software**

Having joined Prophix Software in Mississauga, Ont., in 2013, Laurie Armstrong has made great strides. As manager of HR, she initiated a project to improve the HR infrastructure and align with company strategy by implementing international programs meant to enrich the employee experience, while promoting a culture of continuous improvement. Laurie developed innovative programs in the areas of change management, employer branding, new hire onboarding, enhanced recognition, new benefits plans, and an employee needs assessment to initiate the creation of an employee wellness program. Laurie helped the company achieve top employer awards in 2016 and 2017.

## **Vin Berman**

### **William Osler Health System**

Under the leadership of Vin Berman — interim vice-president of HR and organizational development — the HR team at William Osler Health System has implemented a number of initiatives meant to maintain and further enhance staff morale and a great work culture. She has also been involved with strategic labour relations, the launch of an employee wellness program, a management competency model, and management-focused workshops. Vin definitely has an “open-door” policy, and people always come first. She joined William Osler in 2012 and was promoted to the role of executive director in 2014, then CHRO in 2016.

## **Debby Carreau**

### **Inspired HR**

Vancouver’s Debby Carreau has continued to gain recognition as an HR expert, with regular appearances in this capacity on the daytime television show *The Social*. As founder and CEO of Inspired HR, Debby is highly regarded as a thought leader and author. This year, she organized and participated in a roundtable of the Canada-United States Council for Advancement of Women Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders, created by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and United States President Donald Trump. She has more than 20 years’ experience in the HR field.

## **Daneal Charney**

### **MaRS**

As director of talent at MaRS — a Toronto innovation hub — Daneal Charney is a thought leader on topics related to the future of work. Her mission has included pushing HR as an agent of change amidst artificial intelligence (AI) and other innovative changes, increasing gender equity in tech leadership roles, creating an inclusive, safe workplace, and opening up a global talent pool for employers. Daneal's mandate includes providing talent advisory services to startups in information and communications tech, clean tech and health tech. Alongside her work as an HR innovator, Daneal is an author and speaker.

## **Alina Constantin**

### **Grieg Seafood BC**

As HR manager at Grieg Seafood BC in Campbell River, B.C., Alina Constantin has had another busy year. For one, she increased employee engagement scores from the 31st percentile rank to the 66th percentile rank. Alina also implemented a formal performance management program, and created job descriptions for all positions at the company. She developed Grieg Seafood's first HR analytics/HR metrics program, and started the implementation of Workplace by Facebook to boost internal communications. Alina also started the implementation of a new safety excellence program, and reviewed the entire compensation system, including wage bands, total rewards and benefits.

## **Mark Diker**

### **Penguin Basements**

Mark Diker is director of HR at Penguin Basements — a renovation and construction company founded in North York, Ont., in 2011. He has worked hard to shift the organization's focus to people growth, rather than solely business growth. By standardizing and centralizing the HR processes, Mark has successfully defined the company's culture, clarified and promoted its brand, and developed a more effective compensation and rewards model to improve employee engagement and recognition tactics. He holds his CHRL (Certified Human Resources Leader) designation and has more than 10 years' experience in HR.

## **Gabriella Fermo**

### **Raising the Bar**

As a principal and learning and OD consultant at Raising the Bar in Mississauga, Ont., Gabriella Fermo had a fulfilling year. She developed the coaching skills of front-line leaders in financial services by developing virtual, instructor-led training; she enabled health and safety compliance by developing e-learning modules and assessments; she improved the career transition process by developing content for a customer career transition app for military personnel and their families; and, she delivered workshops around enhanced skills in leading and managing people, influencing change and team collaboration.

## **Jason Fleming**

### **MedReleaf**

As director of HR, Jason Fleming became MedReleaf's first HR professional last fall, and went on to build the company's HR strategy and programming in Markham, Ont. Additionally, he has provided thought leadership on accommodation and drug and alcohol policy development, specifically regarding the management of cannabis and substance abuse in the workplace. Jason launched an advisory services division, which provides training and policy development to employers, and also volunteers with several non-profit organizations.

## **Paula Gilbert**

### **The Town of Pelham**

With the Town of Pelham in Ontario in a massive growth phase, Paula Gilbert took the lead in 2016 by creating an HR strategic plan that was executed in 2017. As director of HR, she led teams from public works, recreation and corporate services to review existing jobs using strategic job grouping and lean methodology. Paula also led a series of change management exercises designed to have people anticipating — rather than resisting — the change to come. Working closely with the facilities manager, she determined the space requirements for 67 employees working out of three buildings, and the anticipated arrival of almost 50 per cent more in 2018.

## **Jerry Gratton**

### **O2E Brands**

Jerry Gratton, vice-president of people and culture at O2E Brands in Vancouver, has been an integral member of the leadership team. The company has won several top employer awards, and most recently went through a massive systems implementation, introducing Salesforce to one of its largest brands. Through this, Jerry's efforts helped keep engagement at 82 per cent, operating under an "It's all about people" culture. He was instrumental in launching a Leadership Way Program, focused on developing all managers across the organization. In 2018, Jerry's team will work to introduce job

mapping to ensure O2E hits its 2020 revenue and growth goals, and top talent is retained through development opportunities.

## **Heidi Hauver**

### **Keynote HR**

Following a series of successful roles as an HR leader in Ottawa, at companies such as Pythian, CIRA and QNX, Heidi Hauver is now CHRO and managing partner at Keynote HR. In addition, Heidi provides career mentorship through Women in Communications & Technology (WCT) and is a member of Hire Immigrants Ottawa's IT Working Group. She is also a member of the Local Employment Planning Council and a member of the National Advisory Committee for Women in Technology with the Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC). Throughout her career, Heidi has also served on numerous boards, including Make a Wish of Eastern Ontario and the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre.

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## **Tiffany Hoskins**

### **REACH Construction Services Group**

Going from the position of HR administrator to corporate HR manager in just over a year is an impressive accomplishment that speaks to the determination and perseverance of Tiffany Hoskins of REACH Construction Services Group in Acheson, Alta. She was previously an HR administrator at Teck Resources for three years, an HR representative at TCL Supply Chain for two years, and most recently joined REACH. Tiffany is also completing her three-year HR Management Certificate at the University of Alberta.

## **Ashley Karpowicz**

### **Aeryon Labs**

Since graduating in 2008, Ashley Karpowicz has made several contributions in the HR field through her work at Crawford and Company (Canada) and the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan. Most recently, Ashley joined Aeryon Labs in Waterloo, Ont., as senior talent and HR generalist. She helped Aeryon achieve the award for Canada's Top Small & Medium Employers in 2017, and played a critical role in doubling the headcount over a 12-month period via new recruitment strategies, branding and launching a careers site that improved brand visibility, candidate engagement and time to fill.

**Anessa Krysko****University of Calgary**

As an HR advisor (academic) at the University of Calgary, Anessa Krysko worked with the HR team to develop toolkits for all academic processes, along with mentorship and training for a new HR advisor and co-ordinators. She was also involved in more than 100 academic appointments, developed and facilitated workshops for department heads and managers, and contributed to a new procedure/policy for the university's relocation operating standard.

**Melissa Mazza****CAA Club Group**

Melissa Mazza has accomplished a lot in her two years at CAA Club Group in Richmond Hill, Ont. She was promoted twice over the course of 12 months, first to HR specialist, and most recently to HR consultant. She has also obtained her Certified Talent Management Practitioner (CTMP) designation. Melissa created and executed a social LinkedIn strategy to boost a culture of recruiting organization-wide for leaders, and ran sessions to educate leaders on the benefits of the site as an employer branding tool and recruitment platform. She has seen her employer's followers grow by 40 per cent on LinkedIn, and doubled the amount of hires through the platform.

**Natalie Mohammed****Juice Mobile**

Natalie Mohammed just recently became an HR manager at Juice Mobile in Toronto. Prior to that, as senior HR generalist at Solutions 2 GO in Brampton, Ont., Natalie was an instrumental part of the human resources team. Over the past year, for example, she led initiatives to increase employee engagement, such as an international team-building event where employees from eight sites participated. Engagement levels went from less than 65 per cent back in 2011 to 91 per cent.

**Jennifer Moniz****Novacore Communities**

The past 12 months were busy ones for Jennifer Moniz, HR manager at Novacore Communities in Hamilton, Ont. She transitioned her employer to a new group benefits provider, saving the resort-style community developer 20 per cent in premium costs, while giving employees greater benefits. Moniz also developed an HR policy manual for five companies, applied for and received an employment grant for a non-profit company, mentored and supervised an HR co-op student, and provided

mentorship and guidance to students from McMaster University.

## **Suzy Moutinho**

### **Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary**

During the last 12 months, Suzy Moutinho has brought the role of HR to the forefront at the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary. As HR administrator and project co-ordinator, she developed a mentorship program for clergy and employees. She developed questionnaires for an international priests survey, conducted mediation to resolve conflict situations, developed strategic direction for the diocese based on the bishop's vision, implemented a performance goals process, enhanced the customer service focus for HR services, and was appointed team lead by the bishop for a restructuring initiative.

## **Lubna Mujtaba**

### **Intelligent Mechatronic Systems (IMS)**

Lubna Mujtaba truly cares about the well-being of employees. As senior HR generalist at Intelligent Mechatronic Systems in Waterloo, Ont., she successfully introduced an employee rewards and recognition program, employee focus group initiatives, wellness and social initiatives (culture and diversity), new parent initiatives (such as flexible return-to-work transition), weekly barbecue lunches or breakfasts, and a volunteer award — all while managing the quarterly employee engagement pulse survey. Lubna was also an integral part of the HR team winning the 2017 Canada's Top 100 Small & Medium Employer Award.

## **Cissy Pau**

### **Clear HR Consulting**

Vancouver's Cissy Pau is principal consultant at Clear HR Consulting and frequently called upon as an expert media source on workplace issues. Highlights for 2017 include guiding a non-profit organization towards the implementation of an effective retention policy, creating a HR strategy for a car-sharing company, and navigating a sensitive disability management issue for a national charity. Under Cissy's leadership, Clear HR earned multiple HR awards this year, including a Readers' Choice award for HR management consultancy from *Canadian HR Reporter*.

## **Tanya Sinclair**

## **Pickering Public Library**

In 2017, Tanya Sinclair became the first non-librarian, non-white female leader to attain a senior leadership role at the Pickering Public Library in Ontario when she became deputy CEO in addition to director of HR. She also completed the implementation of a major mental health workplace initiative to increase employee health and wellness. This included the full implementation of a psychological health and safety system and participation in a case study research project with the Mental Health Commission of Canada around the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. Under Tanya's leadership, the library has implemented mental health activities that include: mental health first-aid training, mindfulness sessions, a joint mental health steering committee of employees, a mental health survey and a psychological health awareness survey. Tanya also volunteered as a recruiting assistant for the 2017 Invictus Games in Toronto.

## **Claude-Antoine Tremblay**

### **Coveo**

Claude-Antoine Tremblay's first job at Coveo in Quebec City was in a reception role. But over the years, he has worked very hard to become an HR manager, then manager of talent community, director of talent community and, finally, HR director at the company — a provider of intelligent and predictive search technologies. The graduate of Université Laval in Quebec City now has a team of nine HR professionals at the 250-employee organization, and says he likes to “address the most complex organizational problems with creativity and out-of-the-box thinking.”

## **Diana Wiesenthal**

### **Corporate People Responsibility**

Diana Wiesenthal, president and CEO of Corporate People Responsibility (CPR) in Winnipeg, works to build better work environments. She is known as an exemplary leader, coach and mentor to many, and an outstanding volunteer. Previously, she was vice-president of people and organizational services at the Canadian Wheat Board, and she has served as president of: the North American Human Resource Management Association (NAHRMA) for Mexico, the United States and Canada; the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA); and CPHR Manitoba. Diana also represented Mexico, the U.S. and Canada at the World Federation of People Management Associations (WFPMA), and served as a governance advisor for the Canadian Aboriginal Human Resource Management Association (CAHRMA).

## **Kristen Winter**

### **Women's College Hospital**

When Kristen Winter joined the Women's College Hospital in Toronto, the HR department was primarily transactional and supported by another hospital. Five years later, the CHRO has moved towards providing strategic support and aligning with the hospital's strategic plan. This has resulted in a people services strategy, with several notable accomplishments in the past 12 months. These include the implementation of a domestic violence program that involves risk assessments, safety plans and long-term support. Kristen also aligned with the equity and diversity mandate by incorporating unconscious bias training into the recruitment of all roles in the hospital, and aligned education and capacity building by implementing training for all staff on trans health, indigenous cultural competency, emotional intelligence and difficult conversations. The hospital also successfully transitioned to a new payroll and reporting system, and Kristen has been instrumental in growing programs around attendance management, return to work, accommodation, wellness and leadership development.

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