



**Provincial Network Daily Briefing Minutes**  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021**  
**2:00PM – 3:20PM via BlueJeans**

**Welcome** – Michelle Brooks, Chair

- Agenda for November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 – approved
- Today's meeting is to focus on the 'top 3 staffing priorities'
- 'Draft' Minutes of October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Still to be shared for approval/feedback
- C3E – Sector Partnership – Minutes of this group were shared and will be discussed further at the November PN meeting

**Other**

**Fall Forum** – Update/Feedback on November 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Provincial Network Forum - All

- Great feedback on yesterday's forum.
- Bryan shared that he is impressed with so many of his colleagues and the knowledge that was shared
- All agree that the historical information shared was great for attendees
- Thank you to all on a tremendous job and presentations and to those that were behind the scenes.
- Sherri K. received feedback on the amazing job done in the sector by PN and for pushing the sector forward.
- Dean really liked the 'summary' that People Minded Business provided in way of surveys and polls. Receiving the results and roll up in the moment and ending the forum on this was very impressive.
- Janet said if there is a way for PMB to provide this role as far as the ONTrac work and share the progress this would be ideal.
- Michelle agreed that this assisted in balancing out the 'chat'.

**Staffing** - Discussion to establish top 2-3 staffing priorities - All

- Michelle said the focus of today's meeting is to discuss and focus on the top two or three priorities: short term; moderate; long term

**Group Discussion** - All

**Wage enhancement and what would messaging, and benefits look like**

- Dave F. – does not feel that 'wage enhancement' will assist with recruitment; however, if taken away it will be a massive morale issue. In the short-term wage enhancement is good; however permanency around this will be important and hope to hear this in tomorrow's Economic Outlook or in the Spring Budget.
- Janet – we can not lose sight of the wage gap issue. If we have even compensation across sector, it will allow so much more opportunity to focus on other things. The work of the Labour Relations committee around coordinated bargaining and sector compensation would really benefit our sector.
- Lisa H. – the wage enhancement creates compression issues between levels of management. She is seeing some of this now due to frontline staff making similar wages as middle management.

- Bryan – feels that the **long-term priority** is ideally the coordinated bargaining and the structure of defined roles and reference to local living wages. Worried about people moving out of one marketplace and into another. If the cost of living is cheaper elsewhere it will create competition regionally. Need a centralized international recruitment structure. We will need to do local marketing, however, do not feel that we will see a major change without an international strategy.

**Short term** - \$3/hr assists however would like to see this as free and clear for our sector to utilize as we need with provision for administrative use.

- Dean - Simcoe wages are \$19/hr where Midland is over \$21/hr. Looking at living range by region would require more dissemination. Compression issues is a concern, and should the temporary wage enhancement be made permanent, how do we address this in a moderation period and if we can't we will have real issues with groups that have that compression.
- Michelle – looked at some U.S. stats today which align to the research that Rob Hickey did around not having opportunity to advance within, and the middle management being the most stressed area. Need to look at a clear career path around this and if there is something that looks at opportunity for advancement and hand in hand with wages.
- Dean – there are several employees going on unpaid LOA's and on heels of TWE. Many of these staff decided to get vaccinated and to receive the wage enhancement. This indicates that it may be a retention strategy if made permanent?
- Dave F. – we do not think broadly enough. For example, in Denmark, students are paid \$2K Euros per month while attending university, with access to the lowest interest rates for mortgages and personal loans. In Australia, the 1<sup>st</sup> \$30 or 60K of income for employees in the not for profit sector is tax free as the Government acknowledges that the non-profit sector is unable to pay as much as the for-profit sector. How do we incentivise the non-profit sector overall? Like Bryan suggested around the regional living arrangement option. There are options to explore that we have not been touched on.
- Janet – the overall social role valorization needs to continue at a public level. Maybe the Journey to Belonging campaign could invite people to have opportunity in our sector with a broader perspective to raise the profile and attract more people disabilities. Michelle thinks this could be moved over to the DSWI-Marketing group.
- Dave F. – discussed multiple times at the LR table that it is not the p/t or f/t positions; it's about benefits and access to benefits. They have heard this and this is a huge driver if we get to more of a coordinated discussion.

#### **What are the 'unintended consequences' around wage enhancement:**

- The 'compression' issue is concerning
- Lorrie – if at the end of the day, day programs are running at less wages than rest of the agency, there will be issues. Free education does not always get the best students/employees. When using PSW classifications work was done much better, and people enjoyed their jobs much more. Strategically if they have PSW with so many years experience, they could be eligible for an apprenticeship program and where we can obtain benefits.
- Eugene- the PN HR has a meeting booked to talk about things that can be done immediately, as the ministry has been asking these very questions.
- Lisa – presenting our sector to those who may not have considered this before is important. For example, there is the Police Foundation Program that is very much in line with what we do in the DS sector. Using skills that are already out there and attracting them from other programs even as a student to give them a different perspective could be beneficial.
- Michelle - aside from coordinated bargaining, coming up with a more structured role possibly around a partnership with C3E where they hire employees at a different set rate for different

qualifications and a signing bonus to assist with immediate needs. This is a different of thinking of this, however, could align with coordinated bargaining.

- As government continues with the costing study the potential for disparity is real. There is a limited pool for social services, and we need to consider how we focus on enticing them to work in alignment as opposed to in opposition to each other. The original business plan put together several years ago may have been met in some instances. We need to revisit what the recommendation is from the employer group to the ministry and government and that aligns with Janet's work and the compensation group.
- Bryan – what are people planning now? Bryan has put forward to his board an aggressive recruitment strategy that in nature could be competitive with his colleagues. Looking at signing bonuses for the recruiter and recruited along with a peer mentoring model. This will ask people to use their networks that could potentially overlap with our networks. Would like to hear what people are thinking on this:
  - ✓ Dean researched this strategy and found that staff making these referrals did not know enough about the person being referred and red flags often come up. This is seen as a barrier and employees did not take this well.
  - ✓ Lorrie – her agency does this and it has not provided a lot of people, however, has worked.
  - ✓ Michelle – her agency apprenticeship program has a built-in reward for the organization that supports the person and the graduate of the program while using the existing infrastructure for the rewards system. When looking at apprenticeships with signing bonuses, this gets us the immediate staff.
  - ✓ Ann – there are a couple of things in her area: Career Fairs and using a marketing company with their manifesto. This obtained 22 people to the career show with 17 that were very interested and only 2 of the 17 that said this work was not them. Recognize that people applying do not understand what the job entails so will be looking at trying to create an online 'get to know the sector' initiative that provides \$100 dollars if they choose to complete the session. If successful, \$1000K bonus after 6 months. Unsure if this will be successful, however giving it a try.
  - ✓ Ann B. shared that at the OHT table, they are looking at a different type of recruitment strategy for working in a different place aside from the city.
  - ✓ The reality is we do not have the bodies to fill the positions and at some point, we will need to figure out how we will do the work with less bodies. Our sector is in for a shakedown and a reality check as far as organization doing similar work.

**Is there any specific messaging on how we want to go back to government on how we approach staffing?**

- Message needs to include the 'statutory obligations and compression issues'. This would be good if it resonates on how this will assist agencies with their pay equity (PE).
- Michelle feels we need to stay as a united front to come up with a strategy for our sector. Is there something in today's conversation that would immediately help us with this?
- The concern with 'signing bonuses' is unqualified people and the quality of our workforce. Sherri heard from her union that staff do not appreciate people getting signing bonuses and that there is no recognition of the long-time employees.
- Michelle suggested that if we look at an apprenticeship program, this is minimal cost, and we can make this available for existing employees as well as for advancement opportunities and retirement planning. If we invest this as apprenticeship this will help balance off new and existing employees.
- Brian S. wonders about the allocation of a one-time fund and putting eligibility around how these funds could be used. Agencies could come up with their own strategies and would be an interesting exercise to see what successors get out of this.

- Dave F. said the biggest challenge is we are all doing this off the side of our desk with no dedication from anyone to take this on and advocate with the ministry around some of the ideas that were discussed earlier on how other countries have approached this.
- Don said this is an interesting approach. Maybe instead of continually requesting money, a one-time salary could be assigned for someone to work with PN and a subcommittee to take this on? It is a 'tangible ask' that can be organized across the sector.

### **Summary of Today's Discussion**

***The following summarizes the direction and recommendation of the group that were remaining on the call after 3:00pm. We will share a meeting invite to meet again next week to further flush out the below summary and then finalize at the hybrid meeting November 25<sup>th</sup>.***

### **Career of Choice- NEW SPIN**

- Thoughts are that a 3-year business case can be developed and presented that will help align recruitment with values and priorities of J2B. Create a dedicated position and coordinated approach through a lead person as opposed to everyone trying to do something off the end of their desk and without perhaps having the expertise.
- The group felt strongly that this centralized approach would really help to collect information and align approaches that would be strategic and sustainable, but where they also could support a centralized bargaining approach down the road.
- This could be a solution that would be supportive to the sector as a whole.

### **Summary of 'Other' Thoughts**

**Short-term Training and Immediate Support Needs combined with a Signing Bonus-** Some interesting thoughts here too. An **unintended consequence** is attracting qualified and authentic interest. Also, the issue of disgruntled existing employees who may go elsewhere to a similar job to get the bonus. While there were lots of thoughts here, we have not landed on a single bullet approach except to say that these need to be discussed and considered together. Some of the concepts discussed today and to begin to further develop organized Career Path approach that is sustainable and has scalability for long term goals, not shared in any order of priority:

- a. People who are thinking they are interested in obtaining a job in the field must watch a 30-minute video that speaks to the roll and work of a DSP (they have a video that they use with the U.S. DSP group that we could use to get some ideas from a production point-of-view). What we really like about this is that we could provide it through the lens of J2B as well as show case the valuable and diverse type of work the DSP does. If they watch the video and answer a Q&A quiz of sorts at the end, they will receive \$100 and advance to the next level of recruitment.
- b. \$500 now to join as a signing bonus and \$1000 at their one-year anniversary
- c. Additional \$500 bonus for registering and beginning the apprenticeship program (the beauty of this is that existing employees could also apply for this, and it would/could address current training needs/succession planning)
- d. Upgrade courses for existing employees/middle management that address the exceptionalities and increase need for expertise in the field (health, behaviour, leadership development skills, change management etc.)

- e. Bonus for existing staff to provide training to new staff; this would be a 'work and learn' for both the new hire and for existing employees from a succession/bench strengthening/vertical career advancement

***This summary discussion will be shared with the PN HR representatives (Ann B. and Eugene V.) for their review and feedback.***

**Next Meeting:**

- ***Next PN 'Regular Meeting':*** November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 @10:00am
  - ✓ Hybrid – Meeting at Christian Horizon's in Waterloo

**Adjournment:** 12:20pm