

Employee Recommended Workplace Awards

Lise Labine
B.Admin., CHRL

Edited by:
Marcel C. Faggioni
B.A. (Hons), M.I.R., CHRL, Q. Med.
Member of Law Society of Canada

The summer of 2017 will have seen so many great celebrations, from Canada's 150th with celebrations held across the country, to the Solar Eclipse in August! Wow! We were so very fortunate to have so many events and things to see and do!

One very important workplace event held in June was the first "EMPLOYEE RECOMMENDED WORKPLACE AWARDS." This event was sponsored jointly by MorneauShepell and the Globe and Mail and was held in Toronto on June 21, 2017 in the brand-new Globe and Mail building. In the lead up to the awards, the Globe and Mail also ran a weekly series during the month of May, examining the mental-health experience of Canada's workplaces. The series provided employers with insights to help employers better support employees with mental health issues.

One of the contributors to the series was Ms. Louise Bradley CEO and President of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) has a mandate to "lead the development and dissemination of innovative programs and tools to support the mental health and wellness of Canadians." This mandate provided by the Government of Canada supports federal, provincial and territorial governments as well as organizations, in the implementation of sound public policy.

The MHCC has one goal- **Creating a better mental health system for Canadians.**

The statistics tell their own story!

- 500,000 Canadians who aren't working are affected by mental health problems in any given week;
- 1/5 individuals are affected by mental health issues;
- 1/3 affected seek help;
- A recent study shows that 70% of employees under the age of 35 would not report a mental health situation for fear of it affecting their employment status;
- \$6 billion is the value of time lost due to mental health issues every year (last tracked 2011).

These statistics remain rather daunting and clearly demonstrate that we have quite a bit of work to do but...we have come a long way...! A further hopeful sign is the number of campaigns and spokespersons coming out to have brave conversations and making declarations surrounding mental health. These are positive signs that change is happening

Having worked in HR for over 35 years, I can confirm that approaches to managing mental health issues, have changed dramatically over the last decade. We can attribute this to the work of mental health organizations, spokespersons, health benefits carriers and generally employers and unions, who witness the effects of mental health issues in the workplace and who want to make a difference in supporting employees who suffer directly or indirectly from mental health issues.

The novel and interesting feature of the "EMPLOYEE RECOMMENDED WORKPLACE AWARDS" is that they are employee-driven! The awards recognize organizations for "excellence in

achieving a healthy, engaged and productive workforce.”

Here is how the awards work:

1. The organization’s employees complete a survey based on four (4) pillars:
 - Work
 - Life
 - Mental health
 - Physical health
2. Upon completion of the survey, employees receive an individual score based on their responses. The aggregate of the company’s employee responses determines the organization’s score.
3. Organizations with the highest aggregate scores were the grand prize winners.

The awards are unique in that they are purely statistically based and more importantly that they are awarded based on employees’ feedback in which “employees determine if their company wins!” Companies must meet a minimum threshold in order to qualify.

There were 32 finalists from across Canada in the following categories:

- Private company
- Public company
- Not-for-profit/government

Each category had three levels: small, medium and large.

In addition to the employee survey, each organization completed an Employer questionnaire in which organizations outlined some of the principles that guide the programs they offer.

It was very rewarding to hear the various organizations up for nomination!

Two (2) organizations agreed to provide a quote on what the award represents for their workplace:

1. **Cégep Garneau** won the award in the category of Large Employer Not-for-profit/Government. Ms. Sandra Dumont, Director of Human Resources, summarizes it as: *“An award recommended by the Cégep Garneau community for the Cégep Community. It represents the engagement of the whole community both employees and students. She further exemplifies the value of this award in that the Cégep is actually preparing the workforce of tomorrow. What better asset than to have the next generation already aware of the benefits of a strong mental health program”;*

2. **Nestlé** won the award for Large Public Company. Mr. Alistair Macdonald, Senior VP for Nestlé Canada qualifies the award as follows: *“The highest form of recognition that an employer can receive regarding its care for employees comes when such an assessment is provided unsolicited from the employees themselves. This is what I love about receiving the Globe & Mail/Morneau Shepell Employee Recommended Workplace Award in 2017. We know Nestlé is a great place to work, but we can always do better and this award provides us with invaluable insights to do just that!”*

The inaugural year of the first award has come to its conclusion; however, organizations can now register for the second year of the “Employee Recommended Workplace Awards” by visiting the award website at the following weblink:

<https://www.employeerecommended.com/>