Letter from the Editor

BY ALBERT J. MILLS

Welcome to the Spring 2018 edition of the Workplace Review. We have seven great pieces in this issue, relating to a wide range of topics across management, marketing, accounting, finance, and management education disciplines.

Our first paper is by Elaine MacNeil of the Shannon School of Business and Peter MacIntyre of the Psychology Department at Cape Breton University. Elaine and Peter present exploratory research on the causes of shopping stressors. Their research indicates that some of the more salient stressors include loud or bad music in stores; bad attitudes of store employees; lack of availability of staff; overcrowded stores; long checkout queues, and lack of stock.

Our second paper, by Megan Thompson and Brad Long of St. Francis Xavier University, shifts gear and helps us to make sense of servant leadership. The paper reports on a case study of a newly introduced leadership and human resources development program modelled on servant leadership and how members make sense of their experiences. Using a sensemaking approach to analyse the range of responses of those involved, Megan and Brad demonstrate the way people assign different meanings to the same event. They conclude that “assistants … are able to make more sense out of the [Servant Leadership Program] and find more meaning within it as they grow and develop through its practices.”

The third paper is by Leslie Wardley and Derrick Hayes of Cape Breton University and Charles Bélanger and Valorie Leonard of Laurentian University. This moves us to an examination of public trust in the accounting industry. To that end, they “explore the concept of maintaining the public’s trust; discuss potential factors that have contributed to the occurrence of unethical behaviour; determine whether fines levied by the accounting regulatory bodies could be considered as sufficient deterrents and discuss how financial crimes may be further eroding the public’s trust.” They conclude that “regulation of the accounting profession by government may not be the answer to restoring the public’s trust, because the profession is very complex and it requires a professional accountant to understand and explain the industry…. While we may not be ready for [extreme] legislation …swift accountability for actions may be the answer to re-establishing the public’s trust.”

The fourth paper is by Kristin Williams and Jean Helms Mills from Saint Mary’s Sobey School of Business. The paper reports on a case study of the global NGO, Junior Achievement and “its systematic construction and subsequent recruitment and promotion of the ideal volunteer.” Kristin and Jean coin the term “ideological colonization, to describe the practice of exporting western virtues of the ideal volunteer identity”. The authors use intersectionality and critical discourse analysis to consider how JA “perpetuates and embodies global practices regionally through a review of annual reports”. They propose that “the individual volunteer is erased under the strategy of communicating aggregate data, emphasizing the corporate sponsor and branding”. The authors consider the usefulness of intersectionality and its application to metanarratives such as poverty and the corporation. They suggest that “as a contribution to management and
organizational studies, the paper offers a critique of the ideal volunteer identity as a neglected area of corporate interest and academic study.”

The fifth paper is by Melissa Gottschall, Meaghan Kells, and Ken MacAulay of St. Francis Xavier University. The paper “explores factors that affect the financial literacy of university students.” Surveying 442 university students, Melissa, Meaghan and Ken set out to “capture measures of financial knowledge, financial attitudes and financial behaviours along with several social and demographic factors.” They conclude that “parental income, whether parents owned stocks or not, year of study, faculty enrolled in, and gender all influenced knowledge. Greater financial knowledge and financial attitude scores were found to have a positive influence on financial behaviour scores.”

Our final two contributions include our regular focus on teaching practices and a case study. Tina Saksida and R. Blake Jelley from the Faculty of Business at the University of Prince Edward Island explore the “initiatives in the University of Prince Edward Island’s Faculty of Business to teach evidence-based management” in the undergraduate and Executive MBA programs. The paper reviews how evidence-based curricula was developed for the programs and provides insight on the perceived benefits and challenges of using this method in the classroom. The paper is a helpful case for those seeking to incorporate evidence-based management practices in their own teaching.

The case study for this issue is by Robert A. MacDonald and Jeff Bandy of Crandall University and focuses on “business model considerations as Codiac Organics pursues growth.” The case identifies key aspects of an organization’s task environment; key aspects of an organization’s general environment; examination of a company’s value chain as a driver of competitive advantage; analysis of operational scalability; and integration of entrepreneurial worldview into organizational decision making.

Afterword

Workplace Review seeks to publish high-quality articles from authors in Atlantic Canada, or on topics pertinent to the Atlantic Canadian and Canadian context. We are also pleased to consider special issues. If you have an idea for a Special Issue of the Workplace Review please contact myself (albert.mills@smu.ca) and Ellen Shaffner (ellen.shaffner@smu.ca). To submit a paper for review, please contact Ellen Shaffner, Managing Editor at the email above.