

## Would You Trust a Computer to Make Your Next Hire?

*AI could make choosing a candidate easier, but would you like the choice?*

**Picture this quandary:** You need a new Customer Service Officer. You've got hundreds – maybe even thousands – of potential candidates interested in the position. How do you choose one? You could probably safely knock off the people who misspelled your company's name or have any typos in their application. And then there are those sweet folks who were honest about their total lack of relevant experience – but then what?

Technology gives us more choices than ever before, but now there are too many choices for a mere human to easily make. Believe it or not, some organizations are turning to AI to make them.

Computer systems that are able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence are making headlines. Companies like PayPal, Netflix, IBM and Facebook are increasingly using artificial intelligence to recruit, vet and hire potential employees. One recruiting technology company, HireVue, even uses a combination of facial recognition technology and predictive analytics to analyze interview videos. From data based on millions of video responses, the software can evaluate potential candidates' interviews based on tens of thousands of data points, such as the frequency with which an interviewee uses the words "I" versus "we," pupil dilation and facial temperature.

If you think that people would still prefer to be hired by a human



being, think again. According to one Canadian study, 34% of adults under the age of 40 would prefer to be hired by an unbiased computer program. The 2016 study, conducted by Intentions Consulting and Nikolas Badminton, a futurist and expert in the future of work, surveyed 2,299 adults across Canada.

While the findings revealed that younger Canadians were more comfortable with technology, trust in AI wasn't limited to people under the age of 40. A full quarter (26%) of Canadian adults surveyed believed that "...an unbiased computer program would be more trustworthy and ethical than their workplace leaders and managers." That might say more about people's faith in their leaders than their attitudes toward computers, but one thing is clear: people aren't holding their breath to be hired by a human.

Are you starting to worry about your looming obsolescence? Don't fret just yet. Certainly tools that

reduce bias can be useful – we all know that sexism, racism, ageism, favouritism and nepotism still exist in the workplace. The use of unbiased metrics to increase objectivity isn't a new idea either. Competency tests and personality tests have been around for a long time, but consider this: Is an IQ test really the best way to determine who the best fit for your organization is? Probably not; at least not on its own.

The same is true of AI. It's great for narrowing the selection of job candidates, but there's a point where total objectivity might not be desirable. Some things are just inherently subjective, like whether or not you like someone. (Although AI is getting better at guessing – Internet dating being a prime example.) The day may come when robots are running the show, and we're just sitting around collecting dust, but the biased human in us suspects that gut feelings will always have a place in the hiring process. **W**



## Is Your Organization Uncool?

*Don't worry – you can still attract top talent*



*In today's tough job market, industries with openings are in a great position to attract new talent if they use the right spin.*

**If you make metal rivets or sell livestock insurance,** chances are people aren't banging down the door to work at your organization. Some jobs will always be less popular than others. Some are unpopular because they seem uncool, some few people know exist (did you know maple syrup coordinator is a job?) and some just seem unpleasant.

On the job search website Workopolis, for example, one of Canada's least popular jobs in 2015 was "Heavy Duty Mechanic Underground". Perhaps unsurprisingly, people weren't clamouring to work on heavy machinery in a tunnel, but maybe they should have been.

In today's tough job market, industries with openings are in a great position to attract new talent if they use the right spin. For instance, a study put out by ECO (Environmental Careers Organization) Canada, identified a high demand for wastewater engineers – 59% of industry employers have vacancies or are forecasting vacancies in the near future. Wastewater engineer may not sound sexy, but by calling it "careers in water quality," as ECO Canada does and giving it a green spin, they are appealing to all the budding environmentalists out there.

The key to attracting talent is employer branding. If you're thinking, "Ugh, not another kind of branding I'm supposed to care about," we're with you. Branding is one of those terms that gets thrown around so much it begins to seem like – well, let's just say, phony.

Yet the value of employer branding shouldn't be underestimated. Remember when computer geek was uncool? It's not by accident that companies like Google made the previously nerdy and dull tech industry a desirable one to work in. Now all the cool kids are coding, and more than two million people apply to work at Google a year.

So if you're tasked with recruiting talent but you're worried that perspective candidates won't be interested in your organization, be cool. Remember that what your organization does is not always as important as your work culture and how you position yourself in the job market. **W**

### Employer Branding Tips:

**1** If you offer any perks or unique benefits, make sure people know about them.

**2** A great organizational culture is your most valuable asset – showcase it in job postings, on your website and wherever else you can.

**3** When it comes to employer branding, social media is your friend (or your adversary, depending on what people are saying about you). It's unlikely anyone's going to take a job without checking you out online first. So go ahead, Google yourself and see what kind of impression you're giving job searchers. Look beyond the usual channels, like Facebook. What are people saying about your organization on Glassdoor?



## Are Generation Stereotypes Fracturing Your Organization?

*When it comes to work, it turns out millennials and older generations might be as different as apples... and apples*



*Since millennials are young, it's easy to blame them for the changes we don't like, but the fact is we have been becoming a more diverse, more technologically advanced, more individualistic nation since before they were born.*

**As millennials begin to outnumber older generations,** countless articles incite employers and HR departments to prepare for the end of work as we know it. Organizations of all kinds scramble to understand these alien creatures, which they have been told are vastly different from every generation before them. Millennials are painted alternately as entitled, unfocused, narcissistic, lazy, job hoppers, and as technological wizards who crave feedback, meaningful work and work-life balance. How unique are these characteristics though? The idea that millennials want something different from work seems true because it is so often repeated, but according to the *Harvard Business Review* “a growing body of evidence suggests that employees of all ages are much more alike than different in their attitudes and values at work.”

**Fact: Canada is changing demographically** Millennials now make up the largest constituent of workers. In 2015 they represented 37% of the Canadian workforce, outnumbering Gen X at 31% and boomers at 30%. They are more

culturally diverse, more highly educated and have a greater percentage of professional women than previous generations. They also have unprecedented student debt and are hitting milestones like financial independence, having children and owning a home later in life. At 73% usage, Canadian millennials use social media more than Gen X and boomers combined. The question is, does this make their work values different from older generations? The answer: not really.

### **Fiction: Millennials value work differently**

In 2015, IBM's Institute for Business Value released a report based on a multigenerational study of 1,784 employees from 12 countries in six industries. It found very little difference between the career goals of millennials and older workers. For example, 18% of millennials listed managing work-life balance as one of their long-term career goals, compared to 22% of Gen X respondents and 21% of baby boomers.

Another 2015 study commissioned by CNBC discovered that, based on six attributes of employers—ethics, environmental practices, work-life balance, profitability, diversity and reputation for hiring the best and brightest—millennials wanted pretty much the same things from their employers as the rest of the population. Most of the differences these studies identified were based more on age than generation. Though young people are more likely to change jobs, for instance, one KPMG survey found that Gen X actually changed jobs more frequently when they were the same age.

Without a doubt, the Canadian workplace is transforming. Since millennials are young, it's easy to blame them for the changes we don't like, but the fact is we have been becoming a more diverse, more technologically advanced, more individualistic nation since before they were born. These huge shifts impact us all. Instead of letting generation stereotypes divide us, it might be time for us to focus more on the things we all want. **W**



# Power Up: Brassicas

**STAFF PICK** » EMILY FOLLETT-CAMPBELL IS JUNIOR EDITOR AT YOUR WORKPLACE

PREP TIME  
**25**  
mins

YIELD  
**8**  
servings

## Ginger Nut Brassica Coleslaw

### INGREDIENTS

#### DRESSING:

- ¼ cup sunflower oil (or other flavourless oil like vegetable oil)
- ¼ cup seasoned rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp Asian sesame oil
- 1 tbsp smooth, natural nut butter, like almond or peanut
- ½ tsp Sriracha hot sauce
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger, minced or grated
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ tsp salt

#### SALAD:

- 2 cups kohlrabi, cut into bite-sized matchsticks
- 4 cups Napa cabbage, shredded
- 2 cups carrots, shredded
- 2 medium scallions, finely sliced
- ½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- ½ cup chopped nuts, like almonds or peanuts, unsalted

### DIRECTIONS

1. **Whisk** together all the dressing ingredients in a big bowl that is large enough to dress the salad in. **TIP:** If you put a little oil on the tablespoon, the honey and nut butter won't stick to it.
2. **Add** the kohlrabi, Napa cabbage, carrots and scallions to the bowl with the dressing.
3. **Set aside** a tablespoonful each of the cilantro and nuts to garnish the salad. Add the remaining ingredients to the bowl with the dressing.
4. **Toss to mix**, dressing the salad. Transfer the salad to a serving dish and garnish with the set aside cilantro and nuts.

### NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS

(per serving): calories 137, fat 9g, carbs 14.1g, fibre 3.5g, protein 4.5g, sugar 8.6g, sodium 117mg, potassium 470mg, vitamin A 118% (of recommended daily intake), vitamin C 60%, calcium 6%

**How often do we buy fresh produce** with the best of intentions only to have it spoil before we have the chance to use it? Brassica root varieties such as cabbages, kohlrabi, radishes, daikon, turnips and rutabagas will not only last through our tough Canadian winters – they will also last in your refrigerator. Imagine, weeks after buying them, when you remember you wanted to make a salad, they will still be usable.

Brassicas are high in fibre and rich in vitamins A, C and K, as well as minerals and anti-cancer compounds – great for cold and flu season. If you're having flashbacks to your grandmother's boiled turnips, don't worry, they're also delicious in modern preparations like this Asian-inspired kohlrabi coleslaw. Make it for dinner and take it to work for lunch the next day and the day after. It will last for at least three days in the refrigerator. **W**



### How to cut a kohlrabi

No doubt you're wondering, "How do I cut into this thing?" Whether your kohlrabi is big or small, here's how to cut it into matchsticks:

1. Using a large knife, cut the kohlrabi bulb into a roughly square shape.
2. Finely cut off square slices.
3. Thinly cut the square slices into delicate matchstick-like sticks.
4. If your kohlrabi is on the larger side, cut the matchsticks into bite-sized pieces.

**NOTE:** If you can't get kohlrabi or Napa cabbage, you can substitute either with turnip or any variety of cabbage (even the prepared, already shredded, packaged kind sold in grocery stores — we won't tell).





# Unlimited Vacation

Does This Benefit Sound too Good to be True?

As you read this article, some of you will likely look out your window at the inhospitable, frozen landscape, and fantasize about your next vacation.

BY EMILY FOLLETT-CAMPBELL





As anyone who has spent a February in Canada can attest to, we Canadians might need vacation time more than anyone. Unfortunately, we're one of the most overworked nations in the world. We're nearly dead last of all economically

advanced countries when it comes to the amount of vacation guaranteed to workers. According to a report from the Washington-based Center for Economic and Policy Research, the only countries worse off than us are the U.S. and Japan.

Her biggest challenge was getting people to think "outside of their box" and thinking beyond guidelines.

The U.S. shockingly doesn't guarantee workers any paid vacation or holiday days, which might explain the growing U.S. trend of unlimited vacation being offered as a benefit. When organizations aren't required to offer any vacation at all, those that offer as much as you want would seem to be at an obvious advantage when it comes to recruiting and engaging employees. Of course, the prospect of unlimited vacation also raises some obvious questions: Won't employees abuse it?

While by no means a mainstream

benefit, companies like General Electric, Netflix, LinkedIn and Virgin Group have highly publicized unlimited vacation policies. We wanted to know if any Canadian organizations were offering unlimited vacation as a benefit. Unexpectedly, the organization we kept hearing about wasn't a tech start-up or a company with a wildly unconventional work culture — it was a hospital.

#### UNLIMITED VACATION AT WINDSOR REGIONAL HOSPITAL

David Musyj, CEO of Windsor Regional Hospital, called Melissa Simas one Saturday morning with an unconventional idea. Inspired by stories he had come across of U.S. organizations with unlimited vacation policies, he asked her what she thought of implementing the policy at their hospital. Simas, who is head of non-union human resources management, was intrigued. Vacation concerns was one of the issues the hospital had in attracting seasoned talent. With nothing to lose and expert talent to gain, in 2012 the hospital implemented unlimited vacation.

As a non-union employee herself — and a self-professed guilt prone person — Simas likes knowing that she can take time off when she needs to without feeling guilty. There are times now when she takes vacation, where before she would have hesitated, like taking a few hours off in the middle of the day

to see her son's baseball game.

Karen McCullough, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Nursing Executive, says it isn't so much about people taking more time off as it is about flexibility. "The biggest story, and the most feedback that I hear, is that it provides an opportunity to take a day, or a day and a half, to do things to be with your children that, before this policy, you wouldn't have been able to do."

#### THE ROLLOUT

The initial launch of the unlimited vacation benefit was not without challenges.

Approximately 250 non-union employees of the hospital get unlimited vacation. For union employees with a separate collective agreement, the longer the service the greater the vacation entitlement, though according to Simas the amount of vacation time that each group gets works out to be about the same. When the policy was first rolled out, this caused some questions.

Simas recalled that "the more seasoned folks, the people who have been here for 25 years" said, "Well, that's not fair. Why does someone who's been here for a year get the same amount of vacation that I get?" Her biggest challenge was getting people to think "outside of their box" and thinking beyond guidelines.

She recounted how a recently hired young woman, moving from a





As with all benefits, Simas states that monitoring the vacation benefit usage is essential to its success.

union to a non-union position, asked for the previous policy to have as a guideline. Simas told her not to be afraid — that it was really just about recognizing what was acceptable and what was not and if she had any concerns to discuss it with her direct supervisor. The policy is managed by the employees' direct supervisors, and it is ultimately up to them to decide what is workable.

The amount of vacation time that non-union staff takes is based more on need and desire than seniority, with give and take from year to year. The policy allows for flexibility based on situations that might arise, such as the death of a parent or significant other.

When asked how the hospital ensures that the policy is the same across the organization, Simas says, "I think that's the point. It's not really the same. Everybody's vacation time is very different...This year I might want to take a great trip to Europe with my family which might be a little bit longer, but next year I might not take as much...There's give and take but it's about finding a balance and having a healthy mindset and being able to come to work every day and do your work with that mindset."

On average, Simas says that the amount of vacation time that employees take is fairly equal.

### THE REWARDS

For Windsor Regional Hospital, the work it took to initially implement

an unlimited vacation benefit was well worth the rewards. For employees, unlimited vacation means improved work-life balance. For the hospital, it's a valuable tool for retaining and recruiting staff.

Vacation used to be a sticking point in recruiting non-union talent because the hospital couldn't offer candidates as much vacation time as they had at their previous jobs. That is no longer a problem, and the unlimited vacation policy now gives them a competitive edge. Located across the border from Detroit, Michigan, Windsor Regional Hospital often competes for qualified staff with U.S. organizations. Due to the difference in the dollar, pay in the U.S. is higher, so being able to offer extra benefits is invaluable when it comes to attracting seasoned talent.

### EVALUATING THE POLICY

As with all benefits, Simas states that monitoring the vacation benefit usage is essential to its success. Windsor Regional Hospital conducts a Quality of Work-Life Survey every two years, in which benefits are evaluated. Additionally, she monitors how much vacation time employees take. About three

quarters of the way into the year she calculates how much vacation time has been taken. If people haven't been taking the minimum amount required by law, they are sent an email reminding them to book their vacation before the end of the year.

As to whether employees take more time off now than they did before the unlimited vacation benefit, McCullough is able to confirm that people take about the same amount of time off.

"You can take as much vacation as you want, but it's with the understanding that your work's under control or completed," says McCullough. However, she finds that as a leader she has to add the caveat that, "Your work will never be done — you're never going to be ahead of it — so don't take that language too seriously." I find in our organization with this policy it's more challenging to make sure that people actually take their vacation than to explain that they can't have as much as they want."

McCullough estimates that the policy is relatively cost-neutral. "When you look at the literature on unlimited vacation, one of the first things that pops out is how much abuse there's going to be and how much more it's going to cost. Our experience has not been that at all. I think it's probably about even. The purpose of unlimited vacation really isn't about saving money [either], it's about creating a work



As exciting as unlimited vacation sounds, it was diligence and planning that made it work.

environment and a workplace that people want to be at that draws people in from a recruitment point of view and retains people.”

#### KEYS TO SUCCESS

As exciting as unlimited vacation sounds, it was diligence and planning that made it work. Stating that it can't be a free-for-all, Simas identified two key points that the hospital paid special attention to make the policy successful:

#### 1 RESPECT THE LAW

Before the new benefit was launched, they enlisted the help of their legal department and a number of consultants, subsequently tweaking it to include minimum vacation requirements and address what was to be done in the case of termination and accruals.

Employees are required to take a minimum of two weeks of vacation. When an employee is terminated, vacation time is calculated, and if he or she hasn't used a minimum of 4% of his or her gross pay then the hospital pays out the difference. In the case of accruals, the hospital needed two different policies because it went through an organizational merger of two hospital sites.

One group of employees had a “use it or lose it” policy, where they were required to use vacation time by the end of the year or lose it. However, the other group of employees came from an organization with accrued vacation. In that case, the hospital froze the accrued vacation those employees had in their banks to be paid out upon retirement or termination.

#### 2 STAFF COVERAGE

In addition to addressing minimum requirements, termination and accruals, Simas states that to have a successful unlimited vacation policy, having the appropriate coverage is crucial. All employees have a backup team member who can cover for them when they are away.

When asked if she would recommend this policy to other organizations, Simas says it isn't for everyone. “Your culture has to be open. People have to be able to have comfortable conversations.” Barring that, however, she would absolutely recommend it.

“I rather enjoyed the administration. I think it's about having open and honest conversations, which we should be having anyway.” **W**

### Average non-union vacation usage

#### PRE-UNLIMITED VACATION

Year	Vacation Hours Used	Weeks Used
2011-2012	146.10	3.90

#### POST-UNLIMITED VACATION

Year	Vacation Hours Used	Weeks Used
2012-2013	167.17	4.46
2013-2014	134.69	3.59
2014-2015	161.95	4.31





## Ultimate Cruise Control

*Could self-driving cars improve your commute?*

*We take a look at just how smart “smart” cars are*

**The national average commute** in Canada is around 30 minutes, but for many of us it's longer. Across the country, commutes are getting longer, traffic is getting worse and distracted drivers who can't put down their smart phones pose a threat to us all. Despite the merits of public transit and walking or cycling, in Canada, nearly 80% of us drive to work. Which (fear of the machines rising up against us aside) raises the question: how great would it be if your car could drive you?

The automated car is not as far away as you might think. While the concept of a car that drives itself may seem like science fiction, Toyota, Nissan and General Motors all predict automation will be a reality within the next five years. Tesla, Google and Uber are already testing automated cars on U.S. roads today – with mixed results – and in January of 2016, Ontario launched a 10 year pilot project to test automated vehicles.

Tesla CEO, Elon Musk has promised complete autonomy in the next two years. Musk's long-term, somewhat alarmingly self-titled “master plan” would enable automated Teslas to make extra money for their owners when they weren't in use by driving strangers around in an Uber-like fleet, as well as allow owners to summon their vehicle to pick them up.

Before you get too excited about the prospect of sleeping or texting on your drive to work, it should be noted that it is illegal to do these things while in the driver's seat of an automated car. The Ontario



automated vehicle pilot project mandates that “the driver must remain in the driver's seat of the vehicle at all times and monitor the vehicle's operation,” and this rule is unlikely to change anytime soon.

As it stands, automated cars have a number of glitches. They don't operate well in the snow or rain, they are susceptible to hackers and they don't work as well on highways and in cities. Yet these technological problems will likely be surmounted. The real hurdle to a truly driverless car is the public perception of safety. There is a general consensus that there should be a human in the

driver seat in case something goes wrong or the car malfunctions. After all, planes have had autopilot for over a 100 years, but we still require commercial flights to be manned by both a pilot and a co-pilot even though they only fly manually for a few minutes per flight.

Alas, for now our dreams of catching up on email and paperwork while being chauffeured to work by our own Knight Rider's KITT-like sentient vehicle remain in the realm of fantasy. Vehicle automation may be upon us, but a truly driverless car is likely a long way away. **W**

# Can You Guess Which Employee Benefits are Real?

Take our wild benefits survey to find out

In the interest of employee engagement and retention, organizations are coming up with ever more creative benefits. See if you can guess which of the following are real, and which are too outlandish to be true:



1 \$50 monthly credit for Exec, a housecleaning and errand-running service.

REAL <OR> FAKE?



2 Take your dog to work day.

REAL <OR> FAKE?



3 Free beer. This speaks for itself.

REAL <OR> FAKE?



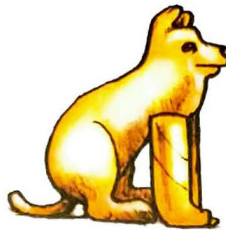
4 \$20 per month to ride your bike to work.

REAL <OR> FAKE?



5 Surf breaks (not the online kind). Not only are workers allowed to hang ten in the middle of the day, reception posts daily surf reports to let staff know when the waves are killer.

REAL <OR> FAKE?



6 Pet insurance. A record number of dogs, cats and other non-human companions are being covered for veterinary expenses.

REAL <OR> FAKE?



7 Hamster derby day. Employees are given the day off to support a fundraiser through a competitive hamster ball race around the workplace.

REAL <OR> FAKE?



8 Paid weddings. (And coming soon — divorce parties.) <sup>ww</sup>

REAL <OR> FAKE?

## Answers

1 **Real.** Weebly offers this particular perk, but many organizations now provide concierge services for their employees for all of those time-eating errands, from picking up dry cleaning to waiting for the cable guy.

2 **Real.** This perk first started in 1996 in the U.K. and 1999 in the U.S. with Canadian companies increasingly participating. The next official Take Your Dog to Work Day (not to be confused with Take Your Kid to Work Day) is June 23, 2017.

3 **Real.** A number of Canadian breweries offer this perk. In 2012, Toronto's Steamwhistle Brewery tried to argue the weekly 12-pack vouchers employees received was part of their

quality control process. Sadly, the party poopers at the CRA convinced the Tax Court of Canada that the free beer was indeed a taxable benefit.

4 **Real.** In the U.S., the little known Bicycle Commuter Benefit allows employers to offer employees up to \$240 per year tax free to promote green commutes and healthy living.

5 **Real.** Patagonia is the company behind this one.

6 **Not only is pet insurance real,** it is one of the fastest-growing employee benefits in the U.S. with 5,000 companies now offering it, including Microsoft, T-Mobile and Yahoo.

7 **Okay we made this one up,** though hamster ball derbies are real.

8 **Partly real** The e-commerce platform Boxed has said it will reimburse any full-time employee for their wedding up to \$20,000. They don't offer extravagant salaries or see the value in frivolous perks like ping pong tables, but they do provide a few amazing fringe benefits, like picking up the tab for weddings and unlimited maternity and paternity paid leave. As for the divorce parties, well that one's fake. We just thought: Why should married people and people with kids get all the perks?