



**Alberta Human Rights  
and Citizenship Commission**

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# **Employers' Perspectives Research Report**

**A Context Review Literature Source**

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## Context Review Literature Sources

*This literature search was conducted in the context review phase of the Employers' Perspectives Research Project. The full report is available on the Web-site of the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission:*  
[www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca](http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca)

### First Search

Bates, M., & Este, D. (2000). *Creating workplace environments that reflect human rights values*. Calgary, Alberta: Cultural Diversity Institute, University of Calgary.

- Literature review exploring a business case for human rights.
- Exploration of the theory surrounding human rights shows that this issue has legal, moral, and bureaucratic aspects.
- Due to an increase of women and minorities in the workplace, there is an increasing focus on issues of human rights.
- Many corporations have human rights conflicts, but few have resources devoted expressly to human rights training.
- Employee turnover, absenteeism, and theft are directly or indirectly related to human rights issues.
- Costs could be reduced and wages could rise for all employees if workplace discrimination was eliminated.
- Most models for implementing human rights in the workplace include “executive leadership, linkages to the corporate business plan, administrative support, participation of all employees and ongoing measurement.”
- Human rights must be incorporated throughout the organization, not just in the human resources branch, for an organization to realize the benefits.

Gandz, J. (1998). *A business case for diversity*. London, ON: University of Western Ontario. Retrieved June 22, 2001, from the World Wide Web: [http://www.equalopportunity.on.ca/english\\_g/documents/BusCase.html](http://www.equalopportunity.on.ca/english_g/documents/BusCase.html).

- Literature review demonstrating the business case for diversity in the workplace.
- Focuses on American literature because there is little research from Canada.
- Discusses benefits an organization may realize by implementing diversity programs.
- Discusses implementation strategies for diversity.



- There is a lack of concrete research demonstrating the benefits of diversity to an organization's "bottom line."
- Most research is in the form of case studies.
- Presents four case studies demonstrating possible benefits of diversity.

Greening, D.W., & Turban, D.B. (2000). Corporate social performance as a competitive advantage in attracting a quality workforce. *Business and Society*, 39 (3). Retrieved July 9, 2001, from Expanded Academic ASAP database.

- Survey of a sample of business college students in the Midwest United States (n=292) to determine whether different corporate social policies attracted students to corporations
- Findings suggest that corporate social policy influences attractiveness of corporations to potential job applicants.
- Factors explored, and found to influence attractiveness, were "quality of products and services, treatment of women and the environment, and issues of diversity."

Hilliard-Jones, A. (1996). Diversity: a global business issue. *Fortune* (April 15): Special Advertising Section.

KMPG. (2000). KMPG ethics survey 2000: Managing for ethical practice.

Retrieved July 24, 2001, from the World Wide Web:

<http://www.kpmg.ca/english/services/fas/publications/ethicssurvey2000.html>

- Questionnaire survey of CEO's of 1000 Canadian corporations with large numbers of employees and large revenues. Also surveyed 300+ public sector organizations.
- 41.6% have a senior level officer responsible for managing ethics.
- 86.4% believe they have open communication channels with no fear of reprisal.
- 20.8% have a confidential means for reporting complaints.
- 39% have an ethics training program.
- "Of the organizations surveyed that provide ethics training to managers and senior managers, less than 10.0% provide more than eight hours per year, and almost one-third provide one hour or less of ethics training per year. For employees other than management who receive ethics training, 42.1% receive one hour or less per year, although almost as many receive one to four hours."
- Most common emerging issues are information security, privacy, environment, governance, and conflict of interest.

Schwartz, F. and Zimmerman, J. (1992). *Breaking with tradition: Women and work, the new facts of life*. New York: Warner Books.



SRHM. (2001). *Impact of Diversity Initiatives on the Bottom Line*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

- Survey of Fortune magazine's "Top 100 Companies to Work For List" to explore aspects of diversity in these companies.
- Taken from abstract ONLY

## **Second Search**

Currie, R., & Peters, Y. (1996). Accommodation of employees with disabilities in the federal public service: a case study approach. *Unequal Access*. Ottawa: Canadian Human Rights Commission.

- Notes taken from abstract ONLY
- This study focuses on the stories of employees, but "it is recognized that there is also an employer perspective which may offer a different analysis of the situation."

Holzer, H.J. (1998). Why do small establishments hire fewer blacks than large ones? *The Journal of Human Resources* 33 (4), 896-914.

- Addresses demographics of human rights issues
- Telephone survey of employers (n=3,000+) in Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, and Los Angeles between June and May 1994.
- Smaller establishments hire smaller percentages of black employees than do larger establishments.
- Smaller establishments hire much smaller percentages of their black applicant pools.
- Fraction of blacks hired rises with establishment size for firms receiving at least some black applicants.
- Firms located in central cities receive more black applicants and also hire more black employees, even relative to the numbers of applicants they receive. The data suggest greater employer preferences (or less discrimination against) blacks in the central cities.
- Relationship between establishment size and the ratio of black employees to applicants holds within metropolitan and suburban areas
- Greater geographic proximity to the central city does not account for the greater tendency of larger establishments to hire more blacks.

Kinard, J.L., McLaurin, J.R., Little, B. (1995). Sexual harassment in the hospital industry: an empirical investigation. *Health Care Management Review*, 20 (1), 47.

- Survey of hospital human resource managers across the United States was carried out to assess the prevalence of sexual harassment allegations in the health care industry and to determine hospitals' policies and procedures for dealing with such allegations (n=97).
- Major methods of communicating sexual harassment policies and procedures are communicated to employees in a number of ways including employee handbooks or policy manuals, training programs,



memoranda and announcements, departmental meetings, posters, employee newsletters, brochures, letters, and orientation programs. Most respondents use a combination of these methods.

- More than half of the complaints were filed against coworkers—more than three times the number filed against immediate supervisors. Managers other than immediate supervisors were charged in less than 10% of the cases.
- A significant number of sexual harassment complaints were lodged against individuals who were not employed by the health care facility—physicians, patients, vendors, visitors, and others.

Laabs, J. (1998). Employers are getting smarter about handling sexual harassment issues. *Workforce* 77 (6), 42.

- Twin studies on sexual harassment complaints at 900 firms showed that the number of human resources professionals surveyed that had handled a sexual harassment complaint dropped 22%, from 92% in 1995 to 70% in 1997.
- One reason for the drop in complaints could be manager training on the topic.
- Survey indicates that in 1997, 62% of companies polled had provided sexual harassment training for supervisors versus 34% two years early.

Laabs, J.L. (1995). HR puts its questions on the line: sexual harassment. *Personnel Journal* 74 (2), 36.

- Survey administered by the Journal in June 1994 (n=200+)
- 74% said that sexual harassment is a serious problem facing business today.
- 61% of the respondents said that business isn't doing enough to address the problem.
- 90% of the respondents to the survey said that their workers don't understand a common definition of sexual harassment
- According to a 1994 survey by *Training* magazine, 76% of all companies report having a formal policy on sexual harassment.
- Some personnel professionals worry that training will cause an increase in sexual harassment complaints.
- Many companies have discovered that sexual harassment must be revisited periodically to ensure employees are aware that you're concerned about prevention and take it seriously.
- Investigation is the second biggest problem for human resources.
- 75% of respondents said that they had investigated a sexual harassment complaint in the past year.
- Another problem occurs when a complainant doesn't want the company to investigate.



Roberts, G.E. (1995). Age related employment issues in Florida municipal government. *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 15 (2), 62.

- Study conducted on a sample of 45 Florida municipal governments to explore the important factors that contribute to the low number of age discrimination claims.
- Respondents perceive older employees as possessing desirable job-related attitudes/behaviors and are productive employees.
- Respondents perceive older employees as being motivated to learn new skills, but have greater difficulty in adapting to changing working conditions.
- Results contradict prior research demonstrating a negative relationship between age and subjective measures of performance such as performance appraisals.
- Attitudes of government employers towards aging workers may explain why municipal government has a very low incidence of age-related discrimination lawsuits.

Stevens, B., & Fleckenstein, A. (1999). Comparative ethics: how students and human-resources directors react to real-life situations. *Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly* 40 (2), 69-75.

- Survey on how human resources directors and managerial-communication students reacted to ambiguous ethical situations involving hotel employees.
- Seven scenarios were compiled from a series of 30 interviews with human resources directors at mid- to large-size hotels asked to give details of any ethical incident that had occurred in their organization in the last 12 months.
- Scenarios were used to develop a survey that asked respondents to rate how ethical or unethical the principal actor was in each situation on a scale of one to five.
- Students and practitioners differed significantly on a sexual harassment incident – directors found this incident more unethical than students.
- Racial-preference incident was another area where directors found the incident to be more unethical than students.

Whitty, M.D., & Andrukonis, M. (1994). Corporate response to the ADA in one city. *Labor Law Journal* 45 (5) 306-314.

- Notes taken from abstract ONLY.
- “A 1993 survey of Detroit area corporate chief executives demonstrated that small and mid-size businesses are not fully aware of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and continued education and policy-making is required. “



Wright, P., Ferris, S.P., Hiller, J.S., & Kroll, M. (1995). Competitiveness through management of diversity: effects on stock price valuation. *Academy of Management Journal* 38 (1), 272-287.

- Study examined the impact that announcements of U.S. Department of Labor awards for exemplary affirmative action programs upon the stock returns of winning corporations and the effect that announcements of damage awards from the settlement of discrimination lawsuits had on the stock returns of corporations.
- Results suggest that announcements of awards may be associated with competitive advantage and that discrimination-related announcements may be associated with inability to achieve such advantage.

### **Other References**

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Calleja, D. (2001). Equity or else. *Canadian Business*, 74 (5), 28-34.

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Dunnette, M.D., & Motowidlo, S.J. (1982). Estimating benefits and costs of anti-sexist training programs and organizations. H.J. Bernardin (Ed.), *Women in the work force* (pp.156-182). New York: Praeger.

Ellis, C., & Sonnenfeld, J. (1994). Diverse approaches to managing diversity. *Human Resource Management*, 33, 79-109.

Fletcher, L. (2000). Women in the workforce bring positive changes for all workers. *Business Insurance*, 34. Retrieved July 9, 2001, from Expanded Academic ASAP database.

Front page news: The number of human rights' cases in the press and in the courts will continue to climb until employers educate themselves to possible problems. (1996, February). *Benefits Canada*, 20, 21-25.



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### **Inventory of resources, search term strings and strategies**

The following is an inventory of the resources, search term strings and strategies employed for this context review. Where appropriate, different search strategies were used with different databases and search engines to make efficient use of the specific syntax appropriate for each search venue.

#### **Search Engines**

We have conducted a number of general Internet searches using Google (<http://www.google.com>), altavista (<http://ca-en.altavista.com>), and Go.com (<http://www.go.com>). Searches used the following terms (formatted using Google advanced search syntax):



- 1 “human rights” or diversity or discriminate
- 2 workers or worker or workplace or employer or employers

In addition to the above general searches, web sites for Provincial human rights commissions were also investigated:

- BC <http://www.bchrc.gov.bc.ca/home.htm>
- MB <http://www.gov.mb.ca/hrc/>
- NF <http://www.gov.nf.ca/hrc/>
- NB <http://www.gov.nb.ca/hrc-cdp/>
- NS <http://www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights/>
- ON <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/>
- PEI <http://www.gov.pe.ca/humanrights/>
- SK <http://www.gov.sk.ca/shrc/>

### ***Bibliographic Databases***

Little relevant information was identified in general Internet searches. More useful have been bibliographic database searches (see Appendix for a list of references of the items identified as relevant and retrieved to date). Bibliographic searches focused on the following databases:

- Expanded Academic ASAP (1980-July 2001);
- Canadian Business and Current Affairs (CBCA)(1982-2001);
- Academic Search FullTEXT Elite (1984-2001);
- ABI Inform; and
- Canadian Research Index (1982-June 2001).

The search strategies that have been used to date are represented as follows:

### **Expanded Academic ASAP, Academic Search FullTEXT Elite and ABI Inform:**

- 1 human right? or discriminat\* or diversity
- 2 workplace? or employee? or worker? or employee?
- 3 canada or canadian?

### **Canadian Research Index:**

- 1 discriminat\*
- 2 human right\*
- 3 work\* or employ\*
- 4 (1 or 2) and 3

### **CBCA:**

- 1 (human rights) in TI
- 2 employer
- 3 1 and 2

### **Second Search Strategy**

Business Index ASAP  
ABI Inform  
Canadian Business and Current Affairs  
Canadian Research Index

1. "Human rights" OR harassment OR discrimination
2. "Human resources"
3. Studies

This search was conducted on the four databases.

Articles and abstracts compiled following the first search were examined to locate possible references and key articles. Author searches were conducted on the databases above and in Web of Science - a citation database. The names searched were

1. Haidee E. Allerton
2. Lee Fletcher
3. Michael Bates
4. David Este
5. Cultural Diversity Institute