



## Qualified Help Wanted

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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It seems that everywhere we turn there are signs crying "Help Wanted" and apparently this is a province-wide concern.

Many of my clients are managers from the construction, business and oil patch industries who are suffering from stress and burnout because of this. They cannot seem to hire enough employees with experience to keep up with the demands. The result, of course, is that companies resort to hiring "warm bodies" to fill positions - a situation they had previously sworn they would never do - as well putting extra stress and workloads on managers and supervisors.

The economic law of "supply and demand" is definitely at play here. As "baby boomers" make their move towards retirement, we are beginning to realize how their expertise will be missed and wonder how they will be replaced. Demographics indicate that the next generation is smaller in size due to a lower birth rate. The result is a situation where there will not be enough workers to fill all the positions in the workplace.

We celebrate our dynamic economy but must also realize that it too contributes to a staffing problem!

Canada's primary solution to the dilemma is to focus on immigration. Over the years, I have watched with interest as trained and experienced individuals arrive in Canada only to have their credentials rejected when they do not meet our country's standards. As well, many immigrants with a great deal of expertise are forced into jobs that do not match their skills because they do not speak English. The result is medical doctors in janitorial jobs.

It must be horrible to arrive in the "promised land" only to find that you cannot support yourself and your family in your established career or communicate with others because of language barriers!

Monte Solberg, who represents this constituency as a Member of Parliament, has recently been appointed to serve as Canada's Minister of Immigration. Fortunately, he has been living in Brooks where there can be as many as 70 dialects spoken in an organization, so he has some insight into the situation and issues involved. My hope is that he will recognize and establish policies that will adequately meet the needs of those who are entering our country - even before they arrive here.

Canada needs skilled and experienced immigrants who will contribute to and benefit from living in this country, not individuals who will end up in the soup kitchens or Food Banks because they cannot reach their potential.

Industrial/Organizational psychologists further the welfare of people and the effectiveness of organizations by helping individuals pursue meaningful and enriching work while assisting organizations in the effective management of their human resources. This cannot be done in isolation, however, and it is therefore important that the larger systems of society work together to ensure that immigration is more than adding "warm bodies" to the population base.