

# Industrial Relations Newsletter

## What do you think of our website?

While we haven't been able to meet in-person as per usual, websites have become an increasingly important resource. As such, we want to make sure you are finding the content you need from our website- [www.gnb.ca/labour](http://www.gnb.ca/labour).

- What information are you looking for?
- How easy, or hard, is it to find?
- What can we do to better meet your information needs?

Please take a few minutes to review our website and provide your feedback to [ir.ri@gnb.ca](mailto:ir.ri@gnb.ca).

## Collective Agreement Retrieval System (CARS)



As we look to improve the information and delivery we publish regarding the Collective Bargaining Volumes [CARS](#), we ask that you take a minute and let us know do you like the current format the information is prepared or would a more streamlined document that shows solely the numeric values of wages increases and trends be of more use to you as a stakeholder. Your feedback as a stakeholder is appreciated.

# GRIEVANCE MEDIATION WORKS!

## ...a quick and voluntary way to resolve grievances.

In grievance mediation, representatives of labour and management meet with the assistance of a mediator to attempt resolution of a grievance prior to arbitration. Grievance mediation is an informal method for grievance-handling that has proven useful not only in resolving grievances but in identifying and resolving situations that produce grievances.

## ...an alternative to arbitration.

Grievance mediation is much less formal than arbitration. The outcome is decided by the two parties directly affected by the dispute, unlike arbitration where a decision is handed down by a third party. Grievance mediation emphasizes compromise, which avoids the “win-lose” situation associated with arbitration. Grievance mediation can be arranged quickly, usually within a few days of a joint request for third party assistance.

## ...how it works.

When a grievance has been processed through the steps of the applicable grievance procedure, a meeting between labour and management may be convened with the assistance of a mediator. The meeting often includes the grievor. Unlike arbitration, the meeting is informal and both sides are encouraged to speak freely and openly. The settlement ultimately reached does not set a precedent unless both sides agree that it should.

The method used in grievance mediation is very similar to that used in contract negotiations. The mediator may suggest various approaches to settlement based on compromise positions adopted in previous grievance mediation cases or arbitrations decisions. In grievance mediation the parties directly involved in the dispute make the final decision on how the grievance is to be resolved. Responsibility for enforcing the settlement also rests with both parties. If no settlement is reached, both parties are free to proceed to arbitration as provided for in the collective agreement.

## ...is inexpensive.

Grievance mediation usually involves only the cost of facilities.

Whether in person or virtual, it works!

...it's your choice

# STAFF UPDATES

## **Rick Merrill, Deputy Director/Mediator...**

... has decided after years of dedication and commitment to Industrial Relations in New Brunswick, that the time has come to enjoy retirement. Rick has formed numerous relationships bringing about positive impacts to the people of New Brunswick. The list of Rick's accomplishments include time with Northumberland Dairies, Coke and the last 20 years with the Province of New Brunswick resolving labour unrest in all the sectors both private and public.

Beyond being a resource to all of us, Rick is one of the first people that our senior leaders and the Minister turn to when they have questions that pertain to any unionized issues. Rick's knowledge and reputation have allowed him to bring about agreements with Health, Education, Construction, Police, Fire, Industry, and the list goes on.

Rick is considered a friend and professional by nurses, workers, union representatives, management, employers all the way to the numerous Minister's that have relied on Rick to bring about an agreement when labour unrest exists.

Looking to retirement Rick is hoping to spend time traveling, skiing, and cycling all the while enjoying time with his wife, friends and family who have shared an amazing person with all of us over the years.

On behalf of the Workplace Services Branch, we thank you for all your hard work and dedication. May this next chapter of life bring you well deserved time and joy to do all the things you love!

**Congratulations on your retirement Rick!!**

## **Andrew Baird, Acting Mediator...**

...has accepted the position of Mediator in an acting capacity. Already in the short period of time he has joined the team, Andy has demonstrated great conflict resolution skills and we look forward to working with him.

**Welcome Andy!**

## **Sonya Main, Acting Industrial Relations Officer...**

... as such, the placements tend to have a domino affect which provides opportunities to work in different areas for our staff. Sonya accepted the role of Industrial Relations Officer, also in an acting capacity. Sonya who many of you know already will bring to this role her experience with Expedited Arbitrations and the preparation of our collective bargaining reports. Sonya looks forward to working with the Industrial Relations research component of this role and working with our stakeholders to produce accurate and timely information.

**Best of luck Sonya, Glad to have you on the team!**

## **Paulette Stewart, Administrative Assistant ...**

...has accepted the position of Administrative Assistant for the Workplace Services Branch and she looks forward to forming new relationships with all our stakeholders. Paulette brings with her several years of experience from the Department of Education in the Financial Services Branch dealing with District Payroll.

**We are very fortunate to have Paulette join our Team!**

# HOT LINK- MANAGING CONFLICT IN THE ZOOM AGE

[Adapted from Harvard Business Review \(HRB\) December 29, 2017 Article by Liane Davey](#)

Many of us have been working remotely this past year and a half and have used distanced communications in new ways. The suddenness of this change leaves a lot of room for misunderstandings to grow before we develop a shared etiquette for our new world of Zoom and Slack business communications. Here's a template to address concerns with online teammates.

## 1. First impressions

It can be exhausting to be on camera all day. However, whenever possible, you should have your camera on. You can't have presence unless you're present. If you can't have your camera on for whatever reason, you should have a picture of yourself as your icon so people can see your face at least. When you meet people face-to-face, you have seven seconds to make a first impression. When you're on camera, you have even less. During this time, people will make judgements about your trustworthiness, likability, confidence and much more! Always start with a smile (unless you're delivering bad news). You will need to make sure you're smiling before the call has connected so you're smiling the minute you are on screen.

## 2. Eye Contact

Remember to look directly into the camera when you're speaking to people, so it appears as though you're making direct eye contact. Put a smiley face sticker next to your

camera to remind yourself that there are people on the other end of the camera, and you want to make a human connection with them. You'll need to balance looking directly at the camera with observing others for non-verbal cues and taking notes. Remember to look up occasionally to show people you're listening. If possible, use a split screen on your desktop to take notes while still facing the camera.

## 3. Posture

Your posture is one of the most important things you can control. It can help you look competent and confident on virtual calls. Expand your posture by sitting/standing up tall with your shoulders back. Avoid slouching, as it impacts your stance and your mood. That's right, sitting or standing straight can also make you feel better.

## 4. Gestures

Humans use gestures to reinforce what they're saying. When you're on camera ensure that you frame

yourself so viewers can see as much of your body as possible. Back up and bring your gestures in closer to your body so people can still see them. Using gestures is a great way to help your audience understand what you're saying, so don't be afraid to use them. Also be sure to read the body language of others but don't make assumptions. Stay open and curious about the other person/people.

## 5. Reading the Room

When you're meeting with people either online or in-person, one of the most important things you can do is observe what is happening around you. Notice if the speaker is looking at specific people, and how they and others are reacting. Are they distracted? How are people sitting? Are they tilting their heads? Once you've collected this data, think strategically about it. It can offer you insights into thoughts and feelings. Based on the information, change the course of your actions accordingly.

...it's your choice

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