

FIRST EDITION - FALL 2021

# Industrial Relations Newsletter

WELCOME to Conciliation and Mediation Services' first-ever email newsletter! You are receiving this newsletter because your organization falls under the jurisdiction of the New Brunswick *Industrial Relations Act*. We hope you will find this quarterly newsletter an informative source for the latest information on conciliation and mediation services in New Brunswick!

## OUR SERVICES

We provide, at no charge, neutral, third-party assistance to labour-management groups in New Brunswick, through impartial conciliation and dispute resolution services.

**Conciliation** – the conciliation officer helps employers and unions reach a collective agreement but does not have the authority to impose binding decisions. New Brunswick labour statutes require parties to meet with a conciliation officer to try to resolve a potential dispute before they can legally take job action. For more information go to [FORM A \(snb.ca\)](#).

**Preventative Mediation** – is a voluntary, non-legislated program designed to help improve relations between labour and management and promote responsible collective bargaining in New Brunswick. For more information go to [Conciliation, Mediation and 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. For more information go to [Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration](#).



**Expedited Arbitration** – is a shared-cost option open to parties to a grievance that allows the grievance to be settled by an arbitrator within a set time limit. For more information go to [11306 brochure ExpedArb \(qnb.ca\)](#).

**Collective Agreement Retrieval System (CARS)** – is an online search engine for collective agreements and arbitration awards filed with the Minister. For more information go to [Collective Agreement Retrieval System \(CARS\)](#).

**Workshops** - a suite of workshops to assist the labour-management relationships. They can be taken as stand-alone pieces or as part of a larger initiative. For more information go to [Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration](#).

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## STAFF UPDATE

There is no doubt that everyone has experienced significant changes in the past year. The team at the Industrial Relations Branch is no different!

- **Paula Ultican** and **Lise Laforge** have exchanged roles for a period of 12 months. Paula has returned to her first love, Mediation, while Lise is Acting Director of both the Industrial Relations and Employment Standards Branches. This is certainly a unique situation and will be a great experience for us and for them.
- **Michèle Savoie** joined our team this past April as a Mediator, replacing **Lyne Légère** who joined the Employment Standards team last October as Deputy Director. Michèle comes

from our human resources team where she gained much experience in labour relations. We are very fortunate to have her now on our team.

- **Pamela Lindsay**, our Labour Relations Analyst with over 20 years with the Branch, decided to retire after 46 years of service to the Province. We quickly grabbed **Andrew Baird**, who possesses the same interest as Pam in labour data collection while also bringing his knowledge of labour relations from the front lines.

- In May 2020, our long-time administrative support person, **Bernice Kelly**, retired after 41 years of service to the Province. We were happy to welcome **Sonya Main**, who joined the team in June 2020.
- Let's not also forget the rest of our team; **Rick Merrill**, Deputy Director/Mediator and **John Green**, Mediator and Chair of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Expedited Arbitration.

In total, a staff of seven. We are few in numbers, but large in labour relations and mediation experience!



During the pandemic, our staff developed the first Learning Video that is now available on



To view, go to:

<https://youtu.be/AckpWqK9f3c>

## A NEW WAY OF WORKING

It is true that 2020 produced some of the greatest challenges in our recent history. Among those challenges were the ways we interact with people. Who would have thought that a simple handshake, a well-known symbol of agreement between parties, could become taboo? Being unable to meet in person and greet each other has had a great impact in the labour world.

With little time and knowledge, the staff at the Industrial Relations Branch soon had to become tech savvy in order to continue offering services to our stakeholders. Now, one year later, this is our new “normal”; we organize online meetings, conference calls, etc. We have had to find ways to work, still efficiently, but differently.

Who knows if we will ever shake hands again, but, meanwhile, we will continue to accept the challenge of change.

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## VIRTUAL OR IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS AVAILABLE!

Interested in having our branch provide a virtual or in-person workshop at an upcoming event, free of charge? We can help, and of course all services will follow Public Health protocols and directives.

Workshops are offered in the following areas:

- Labour-Management Committees
- Interest-Based Negotiations (IBN) Skills Training
- Strategic Grievance Management
- Effective Workplace Skills
- Joint Supervisor and Shop Steward Training

Contact us! [ir.ri@gnb.ca](mailto:ir.ri@gnb.ca)

## VIRTUAL CONCILIATION

Mediator John Green facilitated several sessions via Zoom, bringing more than 50 labour and management stakeholders together in the conciliation of their collective agreement. Geographically, there was participation in several provinces across Canada.



Do you have a great labour-management relationship you would like to share with our readers?

## LET US KNOW!

Email your success story to [ir.ri@gnb.ca](mailto:ir.ri@gnb.ca) and we will consider it for a future edition.



## WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR FEEDBACK!

If there are any topics you would like to read about in our upcoming quarterly issues, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at

[ir.ri@gnb.ca](mailto:ir.ri@gnb.ca) or 506 453-2261.

We will do our best to provide you with info.



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# HOT LINK- FIVE TIPS FOR BETTER VIRTUAL BODY LANGUAGE

Adapted from Apolitical's November 25, 2020 Article by Daisy Ireton

More and more meetings are happening online during the pandemic. Even meetings on the most contentious topics and situations are going virtual: grievance meetings, collective bargaining, mediations, conciliations, and formal hearings. How can you communicate as well as possible when participating in online proceedings in these high-stakes situations? Apolitical had the following tips:

## 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.

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