

A Tale of Two Provinces

HR Leaders in Alberta and BC Predict Different Paths for 2016

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Canada's two western provinces are headed in different directions in 2016, and human resources leaders in each province are bracing for the impact. According to *HR Q&A*, a survey of over 500 established and emerging HR leaders conducted by the Human Resources Management Association (HRMA), the Human Resources Institute of Alberta (HRIA), and Alexander Whitehead Executive Search, 2016 will see further economic hardship in Alberta and brighter economic prospects for British Columbia. The survey asked respondents to comment on the economies of Canada and their respective provinces, along with issues and priorities at the organizational and personal levels heading into 2016.

“Regarding the Canadian economy, 67 percent of respondents anticipate no change or limited growth in the Canadian economy in the new year,” reports Terry Whitehead, Managing Partner of Alexander Whitehead Executive Search. “That forecast changes at the provincial level. In Alberta, not surprisingly, 54 percent of HR leaders predict the provincial economy will experience moderate or strong economic decline and 27 percent plan for no change over 2015. In other words, 81 percent of HR leaders in Alberta predict no improvement or worsening conditions in 2016. Conversely, in BC, 46 percent of HR practitioners anticipate moderate to strong economic growth in the coming year.”

“HR leaders are especially well-positioned to understand the impact of macroeconomic factors and events on an organization's primary asset – human capital,” states Anthony Ariganello, President & CEO of HRMA, the BC provincial organization that supports the human resources profession. “Programs related to hiring, professional development, and executive succession planning are all directly impacted by external economic events. In 2016, concern over weakness in commodity prices and the lower Canadian dollar top the list of enterprise risks expected to impact organizations.”

The new year brings an increased focus on change management at the organizational level for HR practitioners. “HR leaders identified improving employee engagement and culture as the top human resources priority for their organization,” explains Chris McNelly, CEO of HRIA, the Alberta-based professional association representing over 6,000 human resource professionals. “This priority emerges when economic conditions are difficult and organizations have faced or are anticipating layoffs. Implementing initiatives to improve morale and productivity is critical to mitigating the concerns of the remaining employees. When the economy is weaker, as expected in Alberta, employers tend to focus on managing compensation costs; however, employers can still maintain or improve employee engagement and create a desirable corporate culture by investing in professional development which will contribute to retaining top talent and maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage.”

CONTACT: To review the full report, please visit: alexanderwhitehead.com/news

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Alexander Whitehead Executive Search Inc. is a Western Canadian boutique search and management consultancy firm providing advisory services to our Western Canadian clients in the areas of senior management, executive, and board search. Alexander Whitehead operates offices in Vancouver, British Columbia and Calgary, Alberta.

*For additional information, please visit: **Alexanderwhitehead.com.***

The Human Resources Management Association (HRMA), representing HR professionals in British Columbia and the Yukon, works to keep people first in the decisions of leaders by promoting and enhancing the profession. HRMA offers professional development and networking opportunities to its members, and it is the sole grantor of the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation in British Columbia and the Yukon.

*For additional information, please visit: **HRMA.ca***

Human Resources Institute of Alberta (HRIA) is the professional association dedicated to strengthening the human resources profession and upholding the highest standards of practice. With chapters in all major cities in Alberta, HRIA is the third largest HR association in Canada representing over 6,000 members. We are the exclusive certifying body in Alberta for the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation; the standard for HR professionals in Canada.

*For additional information, please visit: **HRIA.ca***

