

THE
NO
VA
PROGRAM

PREPARED FOR:

CITYSTUDIO
NORTH VANCOUVER



CAPILANO
UNIVERSITY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was commissioned by CityStudios to examine approaches on fostering creativity for union and non union workers. In this report, we analyze the management styles based on the book Strengths Based Leadership by Tom Rath, which comprises of investing in strengths, surrounding themselves with the right people, maximizing the team's potential, and understand their followers' needs. We also draw on methods inspired by the 20% time model to suggest ideas in stimulating engagement and inspiring innovation. We emphasize the importance of fostering creativity in the workplace, the differences between union and non union workers, and suggest actions by which to implement our plan in a meaningful and measurable way.

With our research, we propose the NOVA program: a personalized and dedicated program inspired by the 20% time model, for employees to work towards their passion of choice over a period of time. Similar programs have been proven to improve the sense of empowerment, collaboration, success, employee retention, responsibility and work culture within an organization. Companies looking to foster creativity through this program should consider the executing the program in the following manner:

- i. Build a Plan: Ensure management understands the NOVA program and its benefits.
- ii. Schedule Employees Accordingly: Choose how to integrate employees into timeline.
- iii. Communicate Changes: Establish open communication for inquiries that may arise.
- iv. Implement: Officially begin program once planning and understanding is coordinated.
- v. Follow Up: Ensure positive changes and benefits are developing.

Guidelines to this program include identifying problems, ensure understanding of the company's vision and mission, giving power to the employees, encouraging risk taking, implementing reward programs, and planning events and activities. KPIs will be identifiable by observing employee turnover, employee satisfaction, sales quotas, speed of work, complaints & positive remarks.



WHY FOSTERING CREATIVITY IS IMPORTANT IN THE WORKPLACE

Productivity and workplace satisfaction is something all companies seek balance in. Our report proposes that by fostering creativity and finding ways to engage with employees in the workplace, you can improve both those factors. Through our research, we illustrate some of the ways in which these factors are important in the workplace environment.

In a Harvard Business Review written by Nilofer Merchant, it is stated that “When we allow more employees to contribute their own ideas and energy at work, companies benefit in both the near- and long-term.” (2019). This is important for the longevity of businesses and to ensure that companies are benefiting on the human capital of their workforce. “Each of us has a unique perspective,” says Merchant, that which can be explored “using a process that lets people find their own effective solutions and strategies (2019).”

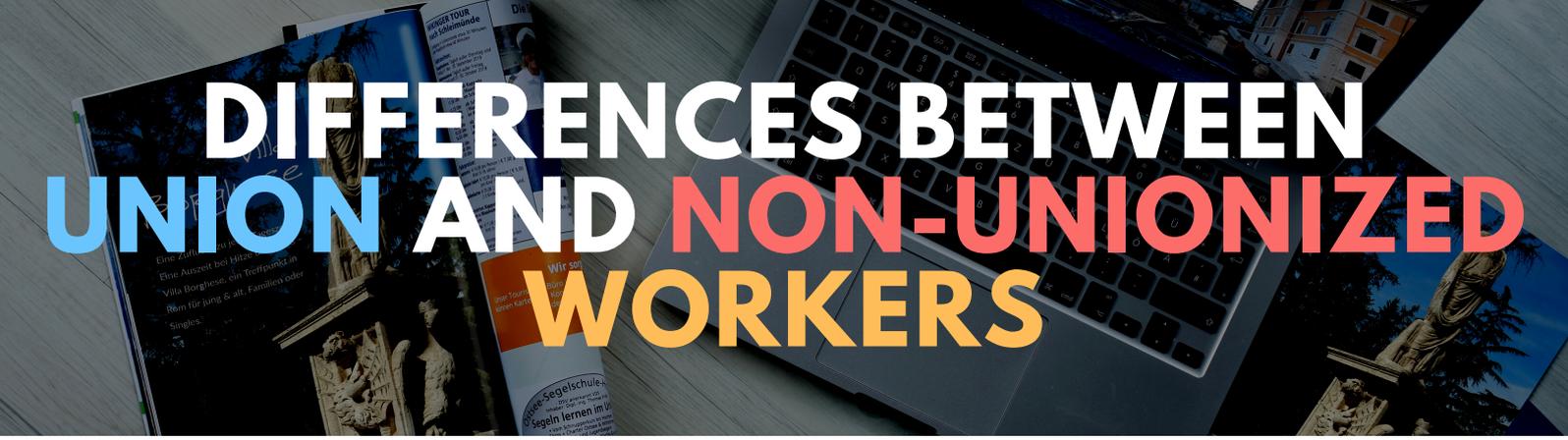
In order to reap the most benefits, companies need to understand that creativity promotes working without boundaries. When you encourage your employees creativity, you also must be open to oncoming changes and the questioning of certain routines. In the article 5 Ways Creativity Leads to Productivity, Boland Jones writes that, “Fostering creativity shows employees that they can change their workplace. Letting people make a visible, tangible impact on their work environment is a powerful motivator.” Gabe Duverge also proposes in The Manager’s Guide to Fostering Creativity in the Workplace, that creativity inspires employees to work with each other and seek feedback (2015). This act of team bonding helps the overall engagement and increases the levels of comfort in a team, which is positive for any organization. “By developing an environment where creative minds are welcome, companies can attract more talented professionals (2015)”, positions can be filled more effectively and efficiently.



WHY FOSTERING CREATIVITY IS IMPORTANT IN THE WORKPLACE

Furthermore, current employees are more likely to stay on board because of the creative environment, job contentment and commitment to the company (2015).

In addition to that, we find behavioural changes in individual employees through this process. Jones suggests that nurturing an idea from conception to execution makes people “more passionate and emotionally invested and will work that much harder to see [their idea] come to life (2014).” Duverge suggests also that the ability to think outside the box allows employees to “come up with unique and innovative solutions to obstacles they encounter.” (2015) This eagerness to solve problems can lead to new ways to accomplish tasks and run the organization more effectively (Duverge, 2015).



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN UNION AND NON-UNIONIZED WORKERS

Workplaces often have a portion of their employees unionized, especially large organization such as; Translink, Marriott hotels and Safeway. However, the higher level management which consists of, “supervisors and managers are ineligible to become a member of a union” (Mayhew, 2019). Since the workplace would have a mixture of union and non-unionized workers there would be a significant number of differences between how employment actions would be handled. Furthermore, there are advantages and disadvantages that comes with working in a unionized and non-unionized environment which affects an individual's work preferences.

One of the key advantages of working in a unionized environment is that, “employees can negotiate workplace contracts” (Anderson, 2018) through their unions. These contracts are a collective agreement that would be identical for all employees who are in the same position (Appendix 3). In addition, the contract would include a detailed outline with regards to wages, benefits and grievance procedures to name a few. Rapid changes the management demands will undergo lengthened procedures, which is always an advantage for the members. Another advantage is that “the only way an employee can be dismissed [is] for just cause” (Anderson, 2018). However, being in a union also has it setbacks such as; paying union fees, being bound to contracts they have negotiated, and losing some of your autonomy. Working as a non-unionized employee has its advantages as well, such as a customized contract for each individual (Appendix 3) and the freedom to control one's own affairs. Overall, the differences between union and non-unionized workers are notable. The opinion of individuals with regards to employment and their work environment will depend on their own point of view. Lastly, we recommend for individuals to conduct their research and choose a workplace that aligns with their values.



THE MANAGEMENT STYLE

Oftentimes, “organizations are quick to look for leaders who are great communicators, visionary thinkers, and who can also get things done and follow through” (Rath, 2018). However, organizations have not been successful in finding an individual who excels in all of these areas. Our concept of fostering creativity in the workplace will be based on the management style from the book, *Strengths Based Leadership* by Tom Rath; which focuses on three key aspects of a successful leader. These aspects are, investing in strengths, surrounding themselves with the right people and maximizing their team and understanding the needs of their followers.

Always investing in strengths

An effective leader is someone who is aware of their strengths and weaknesses, they are the ones who are working on improving their skills all the time. Everyone leads differently based on their skills and limitations. However, a leader would never be successful without their followers. In most workplaces, a majority of employees do not have the opportunity to do what they excel in or what they want to do. If an organization’s leader helps the people they lead focus or invest in their strengths, they could increase engagement rates in the workplace by 73%. In addition, investing in their strengths builds self-confidence, improves productivity and the overall mood of an employee. However, when the company’s leadership lacks or does not focus on their employees’ strengths at all, it is guaranteed that the individuals will not be engaged. The odds of employees being engaged in the workplace are 1 in 11 [9%] which will affect the business negatively. Therefore, it is important for, “leaders to help others uncover their strengths as early as possible” (Rath, 2018). This will benefit both employees and companies by having a rapid individual and organizational growth rate.



THE MANAGEMENT STYLE

Surrounding themselves with the right people and maximizing their team

The most, “effective leaders [will] surround themselves with the right people and build on each person’s strengths” (Rath, 2018). However, that rarely happens in a workplace, the majority of individuals who are recruited or promoted is due to job function. For example, the person who becomes the Chief Sales Manager is the best sales person but lacks the ability to build relationships with colleagues. In addition, most leaders promote people who are similar to them and their point of views. Therefore, the most successful teams are well rounded in terms of skills and personality. The book has categorized domains that should help leaders when creating a team; as they found that teams are more successful when they have a representation of each of these domains. The four domains of leadership are: executing, influencing, relationship building and strategic thinking. Instead of having a leader possess all these qualities, grouping individuals together who have strengths in these areas will lead to stronger and more cohesive teams.

Executing: The individuals who are dominant in execution are the ones who knows how to make things happen. They are the types of individuals who would work endlessly to implement a solution and get things done. Leaders who possess this attribute have the ability to generate and idea and make it a reality.

Influencing: Individuals who have this skill are the ones who will help the team reach a wider audience. They are the ones who are selling the team’s idea to the crowd, whether it is internal or external to the organization. If you want your group to be heard, this individual will take charge and make sure that your ideas and plans are well communicated.



THE MANAGEMENT STYLE

Relationship Building: The people who have this skill are the ones who hold the team together. They are the “glue” that keeps positivity and harmony in the group. In addition, they minimize distraction and keeps the team’s energy relatively positive and high.

Strategic Thinking: Individuals who have strong strategic thinking are the ones who keeps the entire team focused on the present idea and the future outcomes. They are the type who would analyze all the what ifs within the team project. Furthermore, they constantly absorb and analyze new information to help the team make better decisions.

Understanding their followers needs

A leader would not be successful without its followers, however, we rarely analyze why people follow. According to the study Gallup conducted, followers have four basic needs which are: trust, compassion, stability and hope.

Trust: In every relationship trust and honesty are key attributes for a strong foundation. According to Gallup’s research, the chances of employee engagement when they do not trust their organization are 1 in 12. If employees trust the organization’s leaders their work engagement rate improves drastically. In addition, trust also increases an individual’s speed and efficiency in the workplace as trust allows, “people to skip formalit[ies] and immediately get to what is important” (Rath, 2018). Therefore, the most effective leaders are the ones who are authentic to their followers.



THE MANAGEMENT STYLE

Compassion: Some leaders are hesitant to show compassion to their followers unlike the way they would do for family and friends. However, studies suggest that there are benefits when leaders such as, managers and supervisors genuinely care for the employees. Individuals who feels like they are being treated with compassion are more likely to stay with the organization. They would engage with customers more and become more productive and efficient when working. In addition, they will produce more revenue for the organization as they feel like they are part of a family.

Stability: Individuals often seek stability, therefore, would want a leader who could provide a solid foundation for them. These are the type of leaders who are always there when an employee is in need of help. It also means that individuals feel secure about having a job and a stable income from their organization. However, when these basic needs are not met, management may face resistance from the employees. Lastly, employees who feel that their organization is financially stable have a higher engagement rate than those who do not.

Hope: Most individuals wants direction and guidance in the future. The individuals who feels excited about their future in the organizations are most likely engaged in their jobs. Hope gives individuals something to look forward to in the future, sometimes, "it helps them see a way through chaos and complexity" (Rath, 2018) knowing that something exciting and better awaits in the future. However, when hope does not exist in the organization, the employees will lose their confidence in the company, disengage in any type of work and will feel helpless. Therefore, leaders who initiate new ideas will create organizational growth as individuals would have a vision of the company's goal and would work their way forwards in order to achieve it.

HOW TO FOSTER CREATIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE

The Twenty Percent method:

The twenty percent method is a [program] that many companies such as Google, LinkedIn, Microsoft, and Apple have used to allow some creative freedom to their employees. At LinkedIn they have InCubator, Apple has Blue Sky, and Microsoft has The Garage (Subramanian, 2013). All of these companies take this 'rule' and implement it in such a way they feel is best. This rule implements an 80/20 work week where employees are allowed to spend one full day out of their workweek to work on a personal project. This can be anything that they are passionate about or that sparks their creativity. Often it would have a connection to what services the company already provides. This idea was created by Google's founders, Larry Page and Sergey Brin back in 2004 (Adams, 2016). This allowed their employees to work on any 'passion' projects they had, and thanks to this rule, many of the technological advances that are now available on Google were created by this method. Some of which include the creation of Gmail, Google Maps, and Google Talk. Bryan Adams, Founder and CEO of Ph. Creative, decided to implement this rule into his own workplace, and he learned a few things from his experience:

Empowerment, Flexibility, Success, Responsibility, Cost-effective, Collaboration, Failure, Idea sharing, Employee retention, Innovation, Mindset, and Culture.

Workshops and facilitations:

Different workshops can not only improve efficiency in the workplace but it can allow employees to develop upon the skills they have. As well as pushing them to work with one another, creating and establishing teamwork. These workshops can consist of anything that brings employees together. This could include something like a team-outings such as cycling. Partner up with a local cycling studio and get the heart racing! For something a little lighter, the team could all go to a painting class or another type of art class. There are so many different activities to be done and they can all be optional, allowing all employees to participate or not.



RECOMMENDATION

Our recommendation is to utilize and customize the twenty percent rule within a workplace, as it has proven to benefit both employees and employers greatly. Many of the 'lessons' Adams learnt, can easily be implemented and shown in all workplaces. Their relation to workplaces is outlined below:

Empowerment: when employees are allowed to work on projects that they are extremely passionate about, it builds a trusting relationship. It will additionally motivate employees to work hard and be the best they can be.

Flexibility: This allows all employees a choice to work on their own personal project or use their time how they feel is best.

Success: This can be looked at as company success and personal success. By allowing employees to work on personal projects, something really great can come out of it. You never know if an employee will end up working on a project that creates efficiency or even something that can help further the brand. Look at Google with Gmail, that was a 20 percent rule project and now it has become something that many people in the world use.

Responsibility: Implementing such a rule will allow employees to show their level of responsibility. They will need to show their control over their personal project, whether it is a success or a failure. If it's a failure, it can allow employees to show how they are able to learn from it. As well, indirectly teaching them to balance their personal project with their typical work responsibilities.



RECOMMENDATION

Collaboration: This breaks down any barriers between departments in a workplace. Employees will be able to work with others in the workplace on personal projects. They can easily go to others to share ideas and even collaborate on projects.

Failure: There is no success without failure. Every idea, step, and project will not always have the results you want. When a project fails, this allows the employees to grow and develop from it. This failure can be turned to encouragement, telling and showing employees to not give up.

Employee retention: Having happy and engaged employees can translate to employee retention. By allowing employees to work on a project of their choosing, this can cause them to be excited and more focused with their usual responsibilities.

Culture: Incorporating this into the company culture, provides a clear message - you care about your employees passions, ideas, and their integral role in the workplace.



THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

A key role in implementing this program is, of course, communicating it to your employees. There are many ways this can be done, ideally you can have a meeting with all the employees or have departmental meetings. During this meeting, you will present the program and explain why you are choosing to implement it. It will be important to explain the benefits and stressing that it is important. This will show the employees that they have the choice and power to take part in it. As well, be very open to answering any questions they may have. Provide an open door policy so the employees are not hesitant to come to you with any questions or concerns they may have. Another aspect that is important is to encourage them to come to management if they are working on or have completed a project they feel could be beneficial to the company. Throughout the entire program, always keep that communication channel open.



EXECUTION

Steps to Help Implement the NOVA Program

Implementing a 20% plan in the workplace comes with a number of benefits for employees. Allowing employees to be creative and giving them freedom to pursue ideas that they may have for a company makes them more productive. The 20% plan encourages employees to do what's best for your company and it personalizes the company by building care. Employees that care for the company become more productive, less stressed, and happier overall. To implement a NOVA program in the workplace, a company/business should follow these steps:

Building a Plan / Management Support

- The first step is to get all the management on board and ensure that they understand the NOVA program and its benefits.
- The plan should include a timeline for implementation as well. We suggest implementing it over a 2 month period so that employees have time to adapt to the change.
- Management will need to build a plan to best implement this program into their business. Employee scheduling will need to be adjusted in order for this program to be implemented properly.
- It is important that management show support for the NOVA program and that they understand that employees are encouraged to be creative themselves. Management will help employees feel empowered through their communication.
- As part of building the plan we suggest coming up with creative programs that employees can sign up for such as sport activities or art classes. This will give employees something to sign onto and they will understand what the NOVA program is all about. Over time employees may choose to start their own programs where others can then join.



EXECUTION

Scheduling of Employees

- Now that a plan has been built to add the NOVA program into a business, management may have to work with schedules depending on what the business is.
- It is up to the company to decide how they would like to implement the program. As an example, if you have chosen to give employees one day a week to be creative, you must ensure that not all employees take the same day off.

Communicating the Change

- Now that you have management on board, scheduling is sorted, and a solid plan has been devised it is time to communicate this addition to the company.
- It is very important that employees understand that this program is for them and that you let them know that they are trusted. The idea is to empower them so that they want to make the company a better and more productive work environment.
- How management approaches this will help influence company culture.
- Choose a date for this change to start

Implementation

- Now that employees are aware and understand the change, the NOVA program can officially start.
- Management should be open and aware that employees will have questions.

Follow - Up

- Your company needs to ensure that the implementation of this new program has been beneficial to everyone and ensure that everyone understands the change and is happy.
- For more information on the follow up procedures, look at the KPI rubric on the pages below.



GUIDELINES FOR THE NOVA PROGRAM

Along with the steps, there are a number of guidelines that a company should follow if they are to pursue and add the NOVA program to their workplace environment. The company should follow these guidelines when adding a NOVA program:

Identify any problems that might make implementing the plan difficult. Problems such as employee turnover or reasons for low morale and involvement.

Ensure that employees understand your company's vision and mission.

Management must make sure that employees understand who your company is and where you want it to go. In order for the 20% plan to work well, it is important that employees understand this so that they can help build towards the goals and plans of the company.

Give Power to the employees is what the NOVA program was designed for. The program boosts employee morale by giving them responsibilities and allowing them to make decisions on their own that they believe will benefit the company. Empowering employees will create a better work environment and culture for your company.

Encourage your employees to take risks. Letting employees know that they should take risks tells them that you trust them. Building trust will encourage employees to try new things and build a culture that aligns with the NOVA program.

Implement reward programs. Reward Programs can help boost the efficiency of the NOVA program by letting employees know that their efforts to improve the business don't go unnoticed.



GUIDELINES FOR THE NOVA PROGRAM

Plan events and activities where employees can get to know each other. This is especially important in larger companies where many people don't know their colleagues. This builds stronger bonds and relationships within your company and can potentially lead to new ideas and creativity for your business. Events that involve team participation like art classes and sporting events are great for this.



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Once your NOVA program has been implemented in your business/workplace, it is important that your company keeps track and continually evaluates its success. All new programs in a workplace need to be adjusted sometimes to better suit your company. Following this rubric will help ensure that your company succeeds in implementing change by evaluating it on key performance indicators.

When evaluating key performance indicators, we suggest KPIs related to Human Resources, Employee Success, and Customer Relations to be measured on a monthly basis. KPIs relating to Sales and Finances can be measured on a semi-annual basis as the most important indicators of the NOVA programs success are related to the employees and customers of the company.

Human Resources and Employment

- Employee Turnover
- How many new hires per month vs YTD.
- Employee Satisfaction
- Absenteeism Rate

Employee Success

- Employee satisfaction for projects or personal goals
- Customer Satisfaction
- Sales Quotas
- Speed of Work

Customer Relations

- Number of customers gained
- Cost of customer acquisition



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Customer retention
- Customer Satisfaction via Survey
- Number of calls to customer service
- Number of customer complaints and positive remarks

Sales and Finances

- Net Profits vs YTD per month
- Repeat Sales revenue
- Sales from new customers and existing customers
- Number of online vs in-store sales
- Cost of maintaining sales staff



CONCLUSION

Our final recommendations are based on our research following the management style proposed by Tom Rath in the book Strengths Based Leadership. The Nova program is suggested with the union and non union workers in mind, and seeks to carry out the short and long term benefits of companies, and positive effects they can expect on the workplace environment.

We suggest that a timeline be built, and implementation take place over a 2 month period for employees to adapt to these changes. Communication is a very important factor and understanding the process and being attentive of questions that arise will be crucial in accomplishing a new program. The company utilizing this program must follow up to ensure that the KPIs are being met and the plan is going accordingly.

Our program focus on aspects such as investing in strengths, surrounding oneself with the right people, maximizing the team and understanding the needs of followers. Getting people to share their passions, innovations and get them more emotionally invested in their work, and able to come up with unique and innovative solutions is at the heart of fostering creativity in the workplace. With the implementation of our program, we can expect to improve factors such as empowerment, flexibility, success, responsibility, collaboration, and employee retention in the overall workplace culture.



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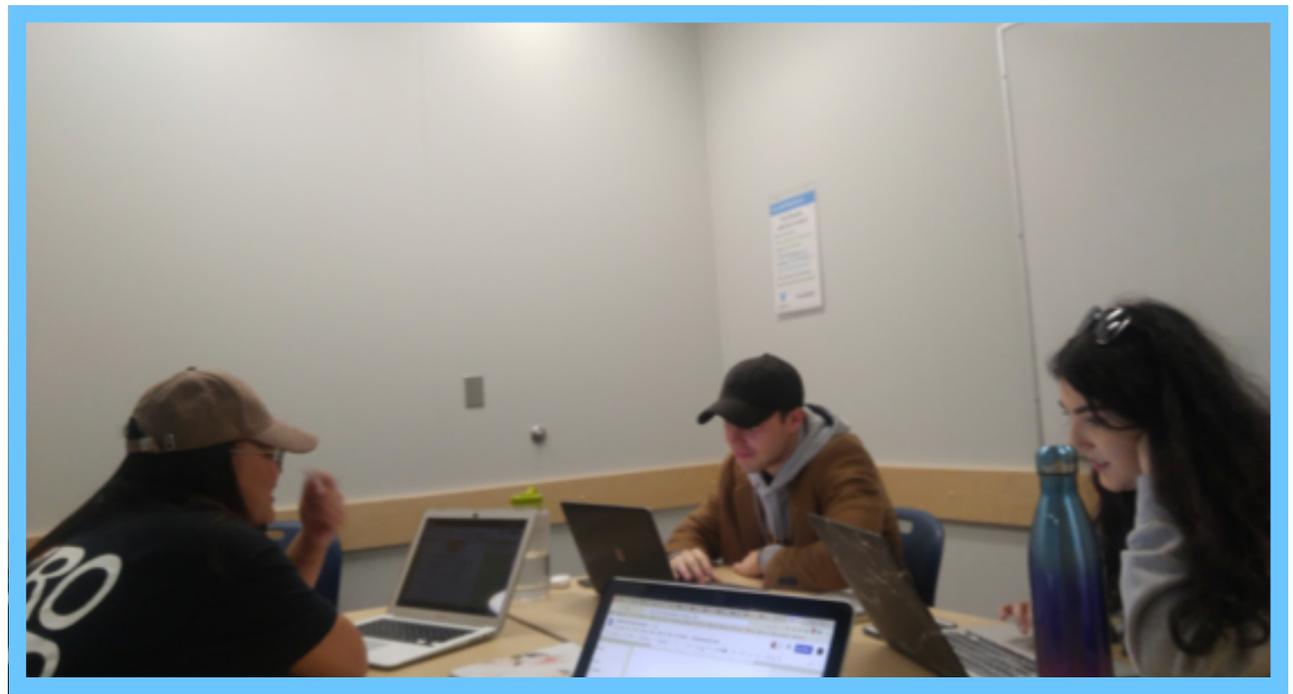
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APPENDIX 1
September 25, 2019



APPENDIX 2
September 30, 2019



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 3

Non-union vs. Unionized Workplaces

	Non-union Workplaces	Unionized Workplaces
Legal basis for relationship	Individual contracts of employment	Collective agreement
Terms of employment negotiated	By individual employees	By the union
Nature of employment terms	Possibly unique for each employee	Identical for all employees in the same job class covered by the collective agreement
Dismissal where no cause or allegation of employee misconduct	Employer has obligation to give reasonable notice based on age, length of service and position held, subject to minimum provisions in employment standards legislation.	Employer must comply with notice and severance provisions of the collective agreement, subject to minimum provisions in employment standards legislation.
Dismissal where cause or employee misconduct is alleged	If employer establishes just cause, reasonable notice does not have to be provided. If employer fails to establish just cause, employer must provide reasonable notice but does not have to reinstate.*	If employer establishes just cause, notice and severance provisions of collective agreement do not apply. If employer fails to establish just cause, reinstatement is possible.
Changes in terms of employment	Law regarding constructive dismissal prevents significant changes without consent.	Constructive dismissal doctrine does not apply.
Process to resolve disputes	Court action	Grievance and arbitration process provided in collective agreement

From *Pearson's Labour Relations Fifth Edition* by Larry Suffield and Gary L. Gannon (Page 6, 1-1)