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“Strengthening Canada’s digital advantage.”

ICTC is a not-for-profit organization that conducts research, and develops and implements solutions to help Canadians take advantage of the digital economy.

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Introduction

Digital media is an emerging, rapidly evolving, vibrant, diverse, and creative industry. It is known for its contribution to game design and development, simulations and interactive training, advertising and promotional content, software design and development, content management systems, and web design and development. Digital media companies are the creators, enablers and aggregators of digital platforms like TV, computers, cell phones and other portable devices.

ICTC has identified that the Canadian digital media industry has the following characteristics:

• It is an extremely diverse industry that changes very rapidly to adapt to technological and consumer demands. It is best known for entertainment (e.g. Gaming and special effects) but it has, and will continue, to increase its influence on many other sectors including, but not limited to, Education, Health, Financial and insurance services.
• There are estimated to be 2,300 – 3,200 digital media companies with about 52,000 employees.
• Annual revenues for Canadian digital media companies exceed $5.1 billion.
• It is a very young industry that is established across Canada with strong clusters of companies in Vancouver, Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Montreal.
• There is no broadly excepted definition of digital media and the lines between technology companies and digital media companies blurs as a result.
• It is a very competitive international market that is growing at a very rapid pace.
• Canada is a world leader in digital media verticals, including gaming.

Many of the human resources (HR) management strategies, programs, tools and mechanisms are standard across all industries. This is helpful since there is minimal information regarding human resource issues facing the digital media industry and there is little to no evidence-based research available. However, there are some specific requirements unique to digital media companies, and some unique requirements for small, medium, and large digital media companies.

The specific references to small, medium and large digital media companies have been made within the narrative sections of the guide. Generally speaking, the size of the company can have a direct impact on the extent to which programs and initiatives are undertaken. For example, large companies such as Google or Apple must take a more strategic approach in creating their culture. Small companies, on the other hand, are able to adapt more quickly to the changing needs of their employees and can work collaboratively to define and create their own culture.

Unfortunately, there is not a-one-size-fits-all approach to human resources management in organizations. Given the recent explosion of the digital media industry and its level of attraction for young and exceptionally skilled talent, the need to focus on innovative and leading edge practices is critical.

This guide is applicable to digital media companies of all sizes. It was designed to inform on human resources principles and demonstrate how they are applied to the digital media industry. The distinction in company size relates more prominently to the extent to which initiatives are implemented and the processes relating to how they are implemented.
Section 1: Strategic HR

A strategic plan for human resources needs to be aligned with the corporate strategy. Internal factors such as the organization’s mission and values, products and services offered, targeted clientele, financial situation, anticipated changes, and company strengths and weaknesses should be considered. The HR strategic plan should also consider the external environment such as the labour market, competition, future of technology in the industry, client expectations, and labour mobility.

The HR strategy involves imagining a desired state for the organization’s future HR and carefully planning to attain the set goals and objectives. A key characteristic of successful small and medium sized digital media companies is agility. Companies that demonstrate agility are able to up-staff for critical skills as projects get the go-ahead and conversely downsize after the project is complete. Companies must account for potential turnover and ensure that production continues in the event of an employee departure.

Digital media companies need to keep their HR strategies flexible in order to react effectively and efficiently in the turbulent business environment. All organizations require the ability to assess human resources requirements quickly and efficiently. Small digital media companies by have their HR planning managed by the owner or the business; planning for the long term may be challenging based on the organization’s size.

A well-defined HR strategy incorporates all elements of human resources and covers specifically the employee lifecycle as outlined above. It should be reviewed every year along with internal and external environmental scans. Companies should also measure talent investments on a regular basis which include costs in recruitment, salaries, benefits, relocation expenses, training and career development, etc. The effective use of HR metrics presents an opportunity for companies to assess the returns on their investments in human resources. Reviews, scans, and metrics can be used as a mechanism to strengthen a company’s market competitiveness.
In all organizations, and more specifically in small and medium sized businesses, efforts invested in talent should be linked to the bottom line. By doing so, organizations can focus on those efforts which are proposed to yield the greatest return on investment.

Digital media companies should also respond to changing market demand with innovative, savvy human resources management. Small companies are least likely to have dedicated human resources personnel within their organizations. It appears that the tipping point for digital media companies to have dedicated human resources personnel is about 100 staff. Given that the majority of digital media companies in Canada are much smaller than 100 staff it is challenging for small companies to effectively manage these creative human resource processes for success. As such, outsourcing the HR function for implementation of the strategic plan is a viable option.

The following is a sample HR Strategic Mission Statement for digital media companies:

Our employees enjoy working for us!
The company's People Strategy is formed around our number one priority – the retention and commitment of our workforce. We achieve this through flexible and innovative practices that keep the working environment attractive and fun in order to accomplish our organizational objectives.

Section 2: Staffing and Retention

Staffing is about finding and keeping crucial digital media talent. The availability of talent with the appropriate skill mix appears to have a direct impact on growth opportunities for small to medium size companies. Staffing includes:

After carefully planning labour requirements, digital media companies must locate those candidates who have competitive know-how as well as self-management skills and values that are in line with the company’s mission.

Very-small, small, and medium size companies appear to be looking for staff and the large and very-large digital media companies seem to be going through cycles of downsizing and hiring. However, all digital media companies face staffing challenges.
Digital media occupations require an increasingly complex set of skills. Employers, especially in small to medium size enterprises, require a diverse set of skills including technical, creative, communication, business, and in many cases, entrepreneurial skills. The lack of well understood and articulated job requirements leads to job seeker frustration and ultimately an inability for first time entrants (new graduates and internationally educated professionals) to gain access to the labour market.

A position profile using ICTC’s Digital Competencies should be created to define the activities relating to the position, determine the compensation level and specify the desired skills and competencies. Once the profile has been determined for the ideal candidate, it is necessary to plan the methods that will be used to create a bank of qualified candidates, select the best applicant, and successfully hire and retain that talent.

**Recruitment**

The recruiting process refers to the series of actions used to encourage qualified individuals to apply for a given position. Managers must acquire concrete tools in order to effectively target and attract candidates. Strategically recruiting to attract highly skilled and qualified talent requires organizations to:

- **Internal recruiting sources:** The first candidates to consider are those who already work for the organization. This inexpensive recruiting source can have positive effects on the work climate and on employee motivation. However, limiting recruiting solely to internal candidates can have its drawbacks. First, it restricts the inflow of new talent, original ideas and new perspectives. Second, it prevents the company from being able to benefit from external candidates who may be more experienced, more qualified, and offer new skills to the organization.

- **External recruiting sources:** When the required skills and competencies are not present or available within the organization, external recruiting measures can begin. A few useful sources for external candidates include: referrals from current employees, unsolicited applicants, job ads, educational institutions, private agencies, professional associations, the print media, specialized magazines, job markets and fairs, employment sites, social media accounts and digital marketing channels.

Regardless of the method used to publish a job posting, it is advantageous for digital media companies to include the following information:

- Brief overview of the company (mission, products, services, corporate culture, working environment, etc.)
- Title of the vacant position
- Summary of the main tasks and responsibilities
- Necessary qualifications, skills or experience
- Benefits associated with this type of position and with working for the company
- Company contact information

The job posting is a determining factor with regard to the number and quality of applicants. It must be written to draw the attention of the best candidates. It must be clear and concise in order to protect the company
from being overwhelmed with applications that do not correspond with its needs. The organization must convey the advantages of working for the company in order to attract the best candidates. In the job posting, the company should list the incentives that would motivate the ideal candidate to apply.

To attract talent it helps to be well known, an employer of choice, and to offer an environment such that candidates will be drawn to the organization. For example, many digital media companies promote their organizational innovativeness. They demonstrate professionalism, quality products/services, and a compelling brand through the organization’s web and social media presence. Therefore, digital media companies should design creative job postings that lend credibility to their “innovative” culture and effectively appeals to the desired future workforce. Tapping into the creative nature of the industry to develop these promotional strategies and exploring non-traditional sources of labour are effective recruiting strategies for digital media companies.

In today’s market, recruiting is less about applying for a position with a resume and more about applicants’ personal brand. For example, searching an applicant’s name on Google, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc. acts as a differentiation strategy in the job market. Applicants are also becoming more creative in their strategies to become recognized by prospective employers.

Another recruiting strategy is to build effective relationships and/or partnerships. This involves leveraging networks of organizations, associations, institutions etc. that can provide direct access to potential candidates. Organizations that are involved externally create an excellent link to potential candidates.

Large and very-large digital media companies tend to hire specialists that have skill depth in either the technical, creative, product/project management, or integration aspects of the work. The very-small to medium sized companies need to hire staff that are multi-disciplinary, or have skill breadth as employees. It is advisable to select several recruiting sources in order to target a broad range of potential candidates. However, a referral program can be a low cost method for attracting specific skills in the competitive labour market.

The digital media industry has a significant reliance on immigration to staff their highly qualified positions. Medium to very-large sized companies appear to be able to manage this given that they are more likely to have the resources and are less risk averse to tapping into the global labour market. This indicates that small and medium sized digital media companies must be aware of immigration processes, procedures and programs to effectively utilize the various streams within the system to meet their human resource needs.

The complex set of competencies required in digital media employees are often not taught to students within a single post-secondary program. However, hybrid programs that cross traditional disciplines such as technology and business are starting to emerge. It is advantageous for digital media companies to become more involved in co-op and internship programs to allow easier access to this talent pool.

Companies need to create awareness of the diversity and career opportunities the industry can provide to students. Recent graduates generally acquire experience with larger companies and then become “available” in the qualified labour pool. However, small and medium size organizations need to develop more creative approaches to industry-education collaborations (formally and at the student level) that benefit both the company and the student.

Small to medium size companies are less likely to hire a recent graduate without industry experience; therefore taking part in internship and co-op programs provides student with the relevant experience needed and acts as an experience bridge for graduates.

Companies at the local level must become active in the development and revisions to post-secondary digital
media program offerings. Creative solutions should be undertaken that benefit everyone rather than focus on the traditional co-op or internship model. For example, if the length of time of co-ops and internships are too short to receive any benefit from the work done by a student, or for the student to gain enough experience to be truly meaningful, then discussions with the student or program coordinator should be made to lengthen the student’s duration with the company. Digital media companies should offer a flexible approach for students to customize their learning based on their interests.

Regardless of the company size finding the right employee that not only fits the company profile, but also has the necessary technical and creative skills is quite challenging. It is very important that digital media companies engage in continuous recruitment initiatives. Organizations that employ continuous recruitment strategies are generally able to secure candidates in shorter timeframes, in large part due to their efforts in staying connected and present within the marketplace.

**Selection**

The selection process is where candidates who best satisfy the established criteria are selected. Organizations should try to establish a diverse working environment. Self-management skills and values that are in line with the company’s mission are very important considerations when selecting candidates in the digital media industry.

Candidates must be screened to eliminate those applicants that are poorly suited to the position and to retain only the best potential candidates. The lack of standardized job descriptions for the digital media industry makes reviewing resumes challenging since position titles are not always reflective of the type of work they performed in past roles. Therefore, the risk or cost of a “bad” hire is potentially increased.

In view of such challenge, The Information and Communications Technology Council of Canada (ICTC) have developed Competency Profiles for ten priority occupations in Digital Media. The Competency Profiles contain industry validated descriptions, typical background, sample job titles, key activities, tasks as well as the technical and business/interpersonal competencies required for the successful completion of the tasks. In addition to the above, ICTC has also developed self-assessment tools that will enable a potential employee or an employer to measure their individual competence or performance. More information about the Competency Profiles of the Digital Media priority occupations could be obtained from www.ictc-ctic.ca.

Other pre-screening options include technical testing or phone conversations as an effort to validate experience outlined in the candidate’s resume. Interviews will then be conducted with the remaining candidates. Conducting remote interviews is an increasing opportunity for digital media employers. Technology such as videoconferencing, web-conferencing, instant messaging or teleconferencing allows employers the opportunity to interview remote candidates without experiencing the expense of travel.

A second interview normally comprises situation simulation techniques and practical tests relating to the position. These in-house tests strive to assess the knowledge and skills of candidates with regard to the position requirements. For example, a programmer-analyst could be asked to develop a basic program simulation.

Psychometric tests can also be useful for gaining additional insight into the candidate’s self-management skills. In this regard, an expert must be brought in to select a test that is appropriate for the criteria being assessed. These tests make it possible to establish a balance sheet of competencies for an individual working in a specific position, and can also be useful for determining a training and job coaching program. The psychometric tests are normally useful for assessing management competencies, sales skills and interpersonal qualities.
Tests used by experts to complete and enrich the selection process include performance tests (in-basket tests such as situation simulation exercises), intellectual aptitude tests (analysis, summary, and learning) and psychometric tests (values, needs, personality traits, and interpersonal skills). The administration of these tests helps to support the final decision through objective analysis.

Lastly, to evaluate qualifications and inter-personal skills in a less formal manner, it can be a good idea to conduct the second interview in a less formal setting (lunch at a restaurant, meeting with staff, social activity, etc.). This makes it possible to observe the candidate’s behaviour in a group setting with the rest of the work team.

**Hiring**

Hiring involves formally offering the position to a recruited and selected candidate. Companies can increase their pool of knowledge and skills by adding new resources. Hiring also increases the company’s capacity to respond to demand.

This step entails making the decision as to whether or not to hire the candidate. This decision relies on five dimensions:

| Competencies | • Education / Training / Know-how  
| Adaptability | • Preparation / Practice  
| Motivation | • Experience  
| Personal Characteristics | • Self-perception  
| | • Perception of others (compatibility with the organization and members of the team)  
| | • Attitudes  
| | • Behaviours  
| | • Reactions during the interview  
| References | • Inter-personal skills  
| | • Creativity  
| | • Self-management  
| | • Professional  
| | • Social media connections  

It is important for organizations to think skills, not age when hiring. Identify ways to apply people’s skills to address gaps regardless of their age. For example, vacancies created by young workers moving into other positions may be ideal for mature workers.
Retention

Lastly, retention refers to keeping the talent once they are in the organization. Canadian demographics dictate that the fight to retain or increase the share of students going into digital media programs will intensify in the near future as fewer students will be available for an increasingly competitive labour market. Medium to very-large size digital media companies also have a constant need to find very experienced senior staff (10+ years) for their high level technical (enabler) and creative (content) roles; therefore, retaining these incumbents once the positions are filled is very important.

Considering that experienced digital media professionals and students are in short supply, it is just as much of a challenge to retain those professionals as it is to recruit, select and hire them. Therefore, employers must develop a retention strategy. The retention strategy should consider that employees are increasingly looking at what kind of organizational culture can be found in the workplace. They are also looking for flexible working hours, compressed work weeks, and having a say in how their department’s activities are organized.

Digital media companies require the agility of staff to learn new technologies at a fast pace to be able to deliver the innovative product or service. Therefore, “career mapping” and career promotion (especially for younger employees) about the vast array of opportunities in digital media should be planned and done in an effective manner. The key steps in career mapping are as follows:

![Career Mapping Process Diagram]

- **Exploration Stage**: Engage with employee to identify knowledge, skills, abilities and interests.
- **Establishment Stage**: Identify positions that meet employee’s interests. Plan for required activities / development that will help employee achieve the desired positions.
- **Organizational Assessment**: Identify all related positions, by level.
- **Maintenance Stage**: Provide support for the employee in future career aspirations. Encourage continued employee development as part of new position. Ensure there are no obstacles to the employee’s success.
Section 3: Employee Policies and Procedures

Today, employees want to be able to not only work from home but also to be able to take four-day workweeks. To some employees the flexibility they receive in the workplace is just as important as the salary they receive. Digital media companies need to move away from the “one size fits all” approach to policies and procedures. They need to communicate and create roles, benefits and incentives with generational differences in mind.

Horizontal company culture is the second major component employees look for when it comes to non-financial compensation. Employees look for more horizontal organizations that have less traditional management and more of a partnership approach where both the employees and managers participate in a two-way communication process. Employees also look for an innovative company from which they can learn and enhance their skills in the industry.

Digital media companies need to tailor their policies and practices and design creative approaches to meet employees’ unique needs, such as telecommuting, innovative office spaces, flexible working hours, offering time available to experiment with new software, personal time on the internet, and creative break areas. It is important for employers to learn about the various workforce generations to gain insight into their own employees and tailor their policies and procedures to meet their specific needs and wants.

In today’s environment labour is extremely sensitive to external influences such as market trends and competition between companies. Employee policies and procedures are useful in enabling companies to respond to this environment and effectively attract and retain employees. That said, it is critical that the Employee Manual be a simple and concise guide to get employees up to speed quickly.

The Employee Manual constitutes a reference tool containing the answers to questions normally asked about company operations and internal policies. It is a management tool that allows employees to better know the company and its’ expectations. It ensures equity and thoroughness in the application of policies, procedures and working conditions. With this tool, the company demonstrates that it cares about its workers and is doing everything in its power to develop a coherent internal structure.

The employee manual can also be used as a means for conveying information useful for integrating, nurturing and developing a sense of belonging among employees. Since it is a unique reference tool, it is important to take the time necessary for its development. The sections normally included in an employee manual are:

- Message from the CEO
- Company background
- Mission
- Philosophy and values
- Management expectations
- Organization chart
- Performance evaluation
- Compensation
- Working conditions
  - Work schedule
  - Overtime hours
  - Recording hours worked
  - Annual vacation and leave
  - Breaks and meals
  - Statutory holidays, absences and paid leave
  - Sick leave
  - Other absences
- Travel expenses
- Personal days
- Training
- Termination
- Other
- Internal policies
  - Customer service
  - Attire (dress code)
  - Anti-harassment policy
  - Confidentiality
  - Use of tobacco, drugs and alcohol
  - Non-competition clause
  - Telephone calls
- Copyrights and Intellectual Property
- Communication methods
- Confidentiality & Non-Disclosure
- Occupational health and safety
- AODA
Given the many points that must be addressed in the manual, it may need to be drafted in several stages. It is important to remain current with regard to legislation and the evolution of the organization. Therefore, organizations must regularly update the document in keeping with these changes.

The employee manual is intended for all employees, so it is important that each employee be given a copy for handy reference whenever necessary. Distribution of the employee manual should be complemented by a presentation to all staff already within the organization. When inducting and orienting new employees, presentation of the manual is essential, since it will provide new employees with an overview of the company where they will be working.

It should be noted that the Employment Standards Acts in each province outlines the minimal working conditions for employees. The working conditions established between the employer and the employee must be equal to or better than those outlined in the Employment Standards Acts. However, the employer may decide to offer conditions that are greater than those required by law.

Section 4: Compensation

The ultimate objective of any compensation policy is to create a sense of recognition and equity for current and future employees. In addition, a compensation policy should also establish a balance between satisfying employee demands and the organization's ability to pay. In order for remuneration to become an effective management tool, the compensation strategy and forms of compensation must be aligned with the HR strategy and the organization's business objectives. This will support the organization's growth and development.

It is imperative for companies to have an effective compensation management system, particularly since the digital media industry's workforce is highly mobile and the associated costs normally represent the highest budget expense. Direct compensation options include base salary, bonuses, commission, profit-sharing, and company stocks. Indirect compensation includes group insurance, RRSP, and benefits such as training costs, membership fees, and flexible work arrangements. The organization must make decisions with regard to direct and indirect compensation in addition to establishing salary scales and establishing the factors that will determine salary increases.

It is necessary to determine the organization's ability to pay, the amount of remuneration it is prepared to allocate for different positions, and the compensation currently offered in the market. In order to establish the highest level of equity possible, base salaries should be established according to the responsibilities and tasks associated with each position and not to the individuals working in each position. Companies can use methods such as job classification or comparison by factors, which will ensure a fair and objective analysis of each position. This process will determine the relative value or worth of each job in the organization which can be used to determine the job level.

Organizations in the same industry often recruit within the same environment, which means they should compare the different forms of compensation being offered externally. To determine relevant comparators, the following factors must be taken into consideration: company size, geographic location, position evaluation (position functions), overall compensation (all direct and indirect elements offered), and the industry. It is a challenge for small companies in the digital media industry to determine comparative average salaries; however, hiring a compensation consultant to conduct an external analysis or using free online salary data such as the federal government, Salary.com and PayScale.com are options for small companies to understand their pay position in the market.
The minimum and maximum salaries paid on the market for each position should be identified and then adjusted to reflect the amounts the company is prepared to pay. These limits should be specified for each position or level to determine pay ranges.

The determination of salary increases takes place by first establishing the different salary levels for similar positions. The differences between levels are determined by means of measurable and observable criteria such as experience, seniority, performance, and specific skills and knowledge. Therefore, it up to the organization’s compensation strategy to determine requirements for increases marking progression from one level to the next.

It is important for digital media companies to offer equitable and innovative remuneration in order to attract the best candidates. It is essential to evaluate the implementation and management costs associated with indirect benefits since these can represent a major expense for the organization. Companies should introduce less costly benefits such as heightened involvement in the decision-making process and participation in training programs that are at the cutting edge of technology. Also providing an innovative rewards and recognition program will help retain top talent in the organization.

Small organizations that compete with larger companies, which are often able to offer their employees higher salaries, must draw on more original indirect compensation options and offer a stimulating working environment. These innovative options can represent significant value for candidates. For larger organizations the main HR need when it comes to compensation is not just focusing on the financial compensation aspects but also on the non-financial aspects. The two major non-financial compensation considerations that employees consider are flexibility at work (i.e. work-life balance) and company culture (i.e. fast-paced, risk-taking, close-knit environment where ideas come from everywhere at every level).

Section 5: Orientation, Coaching and Training

Orientation

Smaller digital media companies tend to find it challenging to train new employees. However, in order to mobilize new employees and help them develop a sense of belonging in the company, an approach should be designed to convey to them all the necessary information as soon as they are hired.

An introduction and orientation strategy generally has a significant impact on retention rates, employee dedication to the company, as well as on employee motivation and support of the corporate mission. It also helps employees adapt to their new working environments, obtain answers to his or her questions, access relevant information, and become effective as quickly as possible. Therefore, it is important to communicate to new employees as much information as possible on the organization’s culture, values, philosophy and expectations at the time of hiring. This provides an opportunity for digital media companies to discuss the innovativeness and uniqueness of their company.

The immediate supervisor will provide information on the organization’s background, values, clientele, services offered, staff, expected behaviour, and specify the role. The supervisor will also present the corporate mission and challenges, organization’s key values and expectations (schedule, personal and organizational expectations), employee manual, working conditions and organization chart. The employee will submit and sign all required documents (employee file, group insurance, pay sheet, etc.), tour the workplace, be designated workspace and tools (computer, office supplies, etc.), tour the different company departments including rest and recreation areas (employee cafeteria etc.), and be introduced to staff and the work team.

Since it takes a considerable amount of time for new employees to learn what exactly needs to go into the
finished product in the digital media industry, it is advantageous to assign new employees with a mentor (an employee who is already in place). A mentoring program can facilitate a new employee’s transition into the specific work context. It encourages a bond of trust to be formed between the employee and the mentor in addition to increasing the effectiveness and quality of learning and reducing the new employee’s anxiety level. Companies should facilitate mentoring and knowledge transfer between workers of different generations to forge positive rapport and mutual appreciation. Mentoring is often confused with coaching activities. The table below outlines key differences between coaching and mentoring identified by the Harvard Business School.

**Coaching**

Faced with a young and specialized workforce, managers often have a difficult time finding a balance between allowing employees to work independently and creatively, versus supervising them and providing control and coaching to enable the organization to attain set objectives within specific timeframes.

Regardless of the size of the company, successful supervision and coaching of employees will inevitably lead to high retention rates. With managers’ vision and ability to communicate and convey clear instructions, he or she will be able to effectively motivate and mobilize employees.

The workforce at digital media companies is characterized by the quest for autonomy and innovativeness, and the need to achieve. A manager who is able to adapt to this new generation of employees and respond to their needs will be able to rise to the challenge of employee retention.

Throughout the entire supervision process, the manager is the one who recruits, evaluates, determines training requirements, etc. He or she should be aware of what work must be performed, as well as the team involved and the individuals comprising the team. The front-line manager must be attentive to team cohesion and to the work environment. He or she must clarify expectations and specify instructions relating to the tasks to be performed. He or she must also evaluate the needs of the company with regard to skills, competencies and resources. Lastly, he or she must provide employees with adequate direction and guidance to complete their tasks.

**Training**

Talent is a critical component to the success of the digital media industry in Canada. Training is the response to an organizational and professional need, and generally focuses on the specific objectives of a given group of employees. It consists of a series of planned learning activities and focuses on the acquisition of knowledge to help individuals adapt to their social and professional environments. It contributes to the attainment of the organization’s objectives. For example, large companies are generally interested in helping managers grow from senior technical roles into managers with efficient people skills. Therefore, it is important to increase employees’ knowledge and skills at every level of the organization and ensure the training is transferable to the work performed.

Employee training represents an investment. It enables companies to increase the skills, competencies and productivity of their workforce while also improving the quality of their products and services. It constitutes a value-added activity that fosters adaptation and individual flexibility with regard to the challenges they face. It is important to identify training needs by recognizing the staff competencies or behaviours that must be developed or modified. Employees working in digital media must renew their expertise regularly due to the rapid pace of change in the technologies that are used in the industry. Digital media employees must keep up to date with the latest software and techniques to position the company with the appropriate competitive advantage.
Internal training programs ensure the transmission of experience and methods specific to the company, in addition to enabling the organization to preserve its internal expertise. Companies should establish internal training programs to accelerate the learning process. Online training resources such as Lynda.com and Pluralsight.com are useful complements to internal training.

Standard company-wide training programs are an important component to employee development. Common key training programs include anti-harassment, effective performance management strategies, leadership development, communications, conflict resolution, etc.

There is also on-the-job acquisition of knowledge. This includes situations where new tasks are assigned to an employee and specific short-term learning is necessary in order for these tasks to be carried out.

In order to design training, companies can enlist a qualified employee or an external consultant to develop, in cooperation with the human resources managers, the specific training content. The training may rely on a variety of teaching techniques: task training, lectures with practical exercises, computer-assisted training, presentation, demonstration, discussion, role play, task training, etc.

Training requires a significant investment of energy, time, money and resources. It is therefore essential for the organization to conduct an evaluation of the training and to measure the return on its investment. By evaluating the training, the organization is able to determine if the objectives set at the outset have been attained. By comparing the objectives set with the results obtained, it is possible to determine how beneficial the training activity has been for employees, and whether or not it has generated tangible benefits for the company.

Consider the following evaluation questions:

• Did the participants enjoy the training?
• Did the participants acquire new knowledge?
• Are the participants applying the new techniques or methods to their work situations?
• What impact has the training had on the company’s performance?

Use training evaluation and knowledge transfer tools to evaluate the performance of the instructor and the adequacy of the training contents with regard to the needs of participants. This evaluation makes it possible to determine if participants benefited from the training and if the teaching methodology was effective (i.e. competencies of the instructor, quality of instruction, etc.).
### Coaching versus Mentoring (Harvard Business School)

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<td>▪ Employee’s support is essential if coaching is to be effective; but not mandatory</td>
<td>▪ Both mentor and protégé participate as volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Mentor to make suggestions and connections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Usually short term</td>
<td>▪ Long term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Can be “as needed”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Coach is employee’s direct supervisor</td>
<td>▪ Mentor is seldom protégés direct supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusion

The digital media industry is new and innovative with some unique HR requirements. The main HR functions and tools that need to be tailored to this industry are Strategic HR; Staffing and Retention; Compensation; and Orientation, Training and Coaching.

The HR management strategies, programs, tools and mechanisms outlined in this HR guide will be disseminated to small, medium and large digital media companies by posting it online and through other channels to all digital media companies in Canada.
# Tool #1: HR Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Definition / Formula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HR Strategy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Metric</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Headcount</td>
<td>Total employee headcount ÷ HR headcount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Costs per Employee</td>
<td>Cost of HR ÷ total employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Outsourcing Percent</td>
<td>HR outsourcing expenses ÷ total HR expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training and Development</strong></td>
<td><strong>Metric</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Investment Factor</td>
<td>Total training cost ÷ total employee headcount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Employees Trained</td>
<td>Number of employees receiving training ÷ total employee headcount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compensation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Metric</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation Costs as a Percentage of Operating Expenses</td>
<td>Employee compensation costs ÷ Operating expenses for the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable Compensation Costs as a Percentage of Operating Expenses</td>
<td>Cost of variable compensation ÷ total compensation costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits Cast Factor</td>
<td>Average cost for all benefits ÷ total employee headcount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits as Percentage of Total Compensation</td>
<td>Total cost of benefits ÷ total cost of compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compressed Workweek Ratio</td>
<td>Number of employees using compressed workweek ÷ total employee headcount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Path Ratio</td>
<td>Number of employees moving upward in the organization ÷ total number of employee movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Ratio</td>
<td>Number of employees ÷ Number of Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HR Planning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Metric</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to Fill</td>
<td>Number of days from which job requisition was approved by an external candidate to new hire start date. (Note: This measures the total elapsed days to fill a vacancy and can help determine the efficiency of the recruiting function.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Length of Service</td>
<td>Average length of service ÷ total employee headcount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hire Ratio</td>
<td>Number of employees hired ÷ total employee headcount (Note: This metric can be calculated separately for employees hired internally and employees hired externally.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer Acceptance Rate</td>
<td>Number of offers accepted ÷ all new hire offers extended (Note: This metric can also be calculated for internal offers and external offers accepted.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee Relations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Metric</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism Rate</td>
<td>Employee days lost through absence ÷ (average employee population x number of work days) (Note: This can be calculated monthly and annually, and at an individual or team level. It can also be focused on specific leaves such as absence due to sickness.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resignation Rate</td>
<td>Total number of employees who resigned ÷ total employee headcount (Note: This metric can also be calculated for employees who resigned within the first year of employment.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involuntary Terminations as a Percentage of Headcount</td>
<td>Number of involuntary terminations ÷ total employee headcount (Note: This metric can also be calculated for the number of employees with less than one year of service who left the organization involuntarily. It determines the number of departures.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Rate</td>
<td>Number of employees promoted ÷ total employee headcount</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tool #2: Sample Job Posting

Company XYZ
Position Title
Location
Term of employment

About the Organization
General information about the organization and its mission.

Flexible hours, generous time off, personal development/training, social outings, health benefits and competitive compensation are just a few of the policies we put in place to keep our employees happy. We also have an open-concept office space located in an urban neighbourhood and a flat organizational hierarchy to encourage collaborative working and communication.

The organization operates in a highly collaborative, high-energy, creative, deadline-driven environment. We effectively balance working hard with playing hard. Our fun, passionate, supportive corporate culture is what makes the company an ideal place to work.

Position Description
Reporting to the Manager, the primary role of this position is to design digital media for clients.

Key Responsibilities
• Participate in team initiatives.
• Manage priorities.
• Provide subject matter expertise.
• Research and collaborate to resolve issues to improve quality and efficiency.
• Maximize productivity and gain efficiencies by leveraging technology and implementing new business processes.
• Develop and maintain positive working relationships and communications with colleagues, clients, and partners.
• Undertake other duties as assigned by the Manager.

Qualifications
• Degree / diploma from a hybrid post-secondary program (i.e. digital media and technology or business) or similar education.
• Previous professional experience.
• Demonstrated passion and initiative to work well in a small team environment to achieve success.
• Experience coaching, mentoring, and positively challenging others.
• Able to work independently, prioritize workload and multi-task.
• Strong technical background and attention to detail.
• Proficiency with office software applications and other related technologies.
• Bilingualism is an asset, but not required.

Desired Personality
• Motivated self-starter.
• Flexible and adaptive to change.
• Takes responsibility for actions.
• Positive sense of humour.

How to Apply
If you are interested in joining the team, please submit via E-mail your cover letter, résumé, social media links (if applicable) and salary expectations to careers@xyz.com. We thank everyone in advance for their interest in our organization but only those candidates selected for consideration will be contacted.

For more information on the company and other exciting opportunities check out our blog or follow us on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook.
Tool #3: Sample of Selection Interview Questions

Questions to determine digital media knowledge and confidence of ideas under pressure

• How would you improve the company’s website?
• How would you use social media to advertise and encourage sharing of ideas?
• How have you affected the success of a campaign you have been involved in?
• What important trends do you see in the digital media industry?
• Why should we hire you?

Questions to determine company knowledge and interest

• What attracted you to our organization?
• What qualities and traits do you have that would be a good fit in our environment?
• What sort of work do you want to be doing and why?
• What do you hope to obtain from our organization?
• What responsibilities would you be prepared to take on and what results would you achieve if we selected you for this position?
• In your opinion, what elements are indispensable to the success of an organization like ours?

Questions to determine integrity and loyalty

• Tell me about one occasion where your integrity was put to the test. How did you handle it?
• Have you ever had to apologize for behaving poorly? If so, how?
• If you saw a colleague acting dishonestly, would you tell your boss? What would you do?

Questions to determine personality, teamwork, and organizational fit

• How would your best friend describe your personality?
• Do you consider yourself to be a risk-taker? Tell me about a situation where you took a risk.
• What type of environment do you like and dislike working in?
• What types of people do you like and dislike working with?
• Give me two or three examples of tasks you don’t particularly enjoy. How do you stay motivated to complete them anyway?
• Describe how you build good relationships in a working environment.
• Describe an example of how you have effectively worked as part of a team.
• Which of your past jobs did you find the most satisfying, and why?
• Which of your past jobs did you find most frustrating, and why?
• Tell me about the best boss you ever had. Now tell me about your worst boss. Why was it so pleasant or difficult to work with these people?
• How did your best boss encourage you to excel? What method did he or she use?
• What professional accomplishment are you most proud of?
• What is the most interesting thing you have done in the past three years?
• How do you measure your own success?
• What are your short and long-term professional objectives?

Questions to identify past mistakes

• When were you criticized the last time? How did you react?
• Tell me about a mistake you have learned from.
• Tell me about a situation where you failed. What did you do to set things right?
• Tell me about a situation where you suddenly had to change course.
• If you could change one thing about a business related decision you have made, what would it be and why?
Questions to determine creativity, innovativeness, and ability to find solutions

• Tell me about a time you had to design an original solution.
• Tell me about something innovative that you have done.
• What was the craziest idea you ever had? Did you see it through?
• How did you react to somebody who shared a new idea with you that seemed particularly strange or unusual? What did you do?
• If you could do one thing to change the world, what would it be?
• What was the most difficult decision you have ever had to make? How did you arrive at your final decision?
• Tell me about a time you had to work under pressure and meet deadlines. How did you succeed?
• Have you ever been in a situation where you had to meet two different deadlines at the request of two different people and you were unable to meet both? What did you do?
• What professional problem-solving techniques work best for you? Give me an example of one of your solutions to a delicate problem?

Other relevant questions

• Do you have a professional blog, Facebook, Twitter and/or LinkedIn profile?
• Is there anything else you would like to tell me about yourself that we have not already discussed?
• Do you have any questions?
Tool #4: Sample of Flexible Work Arrangement Policy

The purpose of the Flexible Work Arrangement Policy is to promote flexible work options that are advantageous for both the employer and the employee. Flexible work options are in regards to altering the scheduling of hours worked, amount of hours worked, and place of work on a regular basis. Examples of Flexible Work Arrangements include:

**Job Sharing** – Where two employees share a full-time position so both are able to work part-time.

**Compressed Work Week** – Employees work longer hours in exchange for a reduction in the number of working days in their workweek.

**Flex-Time** – Allows an employee to alter the start and end times of her/his work day, without varying the number of hours worked per week.

**Telecommuting** – Work is conducted remotely (i.e. from an employee’s home), using telecommunications to connect to the workplace.

A Flexible Work Arrangement must be pre-approved by the organization and can be discontinued by the employer or employee at any time given the appropriate amount of notice.
Tool #5: General Training Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Project Management</td>
<td>3 people (designers and developers)</td>
<td>XX Training Group</td>
<td>$ XX.XX</td>
<td>8 hours</td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teamwork</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Digital Media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>