

**GLOBAL BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE  
On Addiction and Mental Health  
200 King St., West, Suite 1702, Toronto, Ontario M5H 3T4**

**bill.wilkerson@gpcinternational.com  
www.mentalhealthroundtable.ca**

*The Roundtable is affiliated with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health  
A World Health Organization Center of Excellence  
and  
Resides at GPC International*

**KEYNOTE SPEECH BY**

**BILL WILKERSON, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO**

**GLOBAL BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE ON ADDICTION AND  
MENTAL HEALTH**

**TO**

**WARREN SHEPELL CONSULTANTS CORP.  
NATIONAL MEETING**

**JULY 5, 2002**

**Delta Chelsea Hotel**

**Toronto, Ontario**

**(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)**

**Keynote Speech by  
Bill Wilkerson, Co-founder and CEO  
Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health  
To  
Warren Shepell Consultants Corp. National Meeting  
July 5, 2002  
Toronto, Ontario**

I am pleased to be with you this morning.

Last night was a notable – and delightful evening. May I humbly add my congratulations and best wishes to Warren.

He is a rarity in the world of business – a visionary whose vision really works – and endures.

I understand this National Meeting of the company is a first. I am sure it has been fruitful. And, I understand, quite inventive. That you are tackling everything from pricing to relationship is healthy and admirable.

And on this occasion, I wish to salute your new CEO, Rod Phillips. He walks where others fear to tread – and I know his will be a superb stewardship.

This morning I would like to talk a bit about the market place in which you work – the times in which we live – and the larger purposes we can aspire to serve.

The context for my remarks has been shaped by Warren Shepell the firm and Warren Shepell the man.

Both represent serving the public interest in a manner at one with the corporate model. That means two things. Meeting your financial targets, which Rod covered yesterday, and doing your job with integrity.

Can we not say enough about that these days.

Given my interest in mental health matters, I am most grateful for the foresight demonstrated by Warren Shepell, Jack Santa Barbara and their like for putting mental health front and centre in the design and delivery of EAP services.

It now falls to you – to all of us, really – to climb the next hill in the journey they have mapped out for us.

The roots of EAPs are dug deep in the history of managing human distress whatever the source.

As the new century unfolds, that history of service and commitment to the well-being of others will – by driving necessity – be repeated chapter upon chapter.

Now, more than ever, we need what you do – we need who you are.

The reasons for this abound:

Huge segments of our population today are hurried, worried and rattled by change.

Working parents face perpetuated uncertainty in the security of their jobs. Meanwhile, their kids are catching their stress like the flu. The average age of onset for anxiety disorders in this country is 12.

The Roundtable is exploring this issue with the Toronto District School Boards and I hope to convene a national telephone conference of school and business leaders early next year.

The stress crisis we now – all of us – feel and face was born in the dawning hours of the PC revolution.

Psychological job strain, the rise of stress-related absence from work and the pressures facing a generation of workers squeezed by child and elder care duties on one side and the expanded job demands of a rapidly-downsized economy on the other – all of these began to collect like a storm in the night in the decade ending in 1993.

It was there – it was then – that your mission as EAP professionals was affirmed in bold face.

That same year, 1993, business crossed a divide – for the first time, industries world wide spent more money in the acquisition of telecommunications equipment than industrial machinery.

The connections between people became more important than the bloodline of machines.

The information generation was truly born in the world market place.

Moore's Law – governing the exponential year-over-year growth in new computer technology – took hold of our daily work lives.

In evidence of that, the Ford Motor Company later gave all 400,000 of its employees a personal computer – ushering in the 24/7 work week.

Economies grew and according to Citibank CEO, Walter Wristen, information about money became more important than money itself. But something else happened. We stepped into Charles Handy's the "Age of Unreason."

Change was discontinuous, not part of a pattern, altering the way our work was organized, recognized and ultimately paid for.

The world, it seemed – then and now, a decade later – was in a headlong rush to get somewhere. And computer technology became the wings of flight.

A bit later on, in the mid-90s, the National Opinion Research Centre at the University of Chicago noted that "these are good economic times but there is not a lot of euphoria out there."

More than 75 per cent of all Americans were worried about job security.

One of my favourite journalists, Deidre McMurdy, wrote in MacLeans that "despite rosy economic forecasts, many Canadians are contending with declining real incomes, record personal debt and insecure employment."

In an article headlined "Managing the Profit Stream", the Financial Post said that what should be "a time of back-slapping celebration in Canada remains instead, a period of uneasy questioning."

A quarter century ago, lay-off's happened. But they were temporary. Economic up-and-down cycles defined good and bad times. Those lines of definition seem blurred.

Today, for most people, the good times are as hard as the bad.

The time and space of working people has become more compressed. At work, the top ten sources of toxic stress gained weight.

More and more, employees lost control over their hourly and daily tasks – ironically just as we, in senior management, decided to "empower them."

Priorities at work maddeningly moved around like the hands on a clock.

Employees came face-to-face with ambiguity in their job and in their future. Shareholder value became the Sun God of business. And ruled sternly.

In his name, a culture of downsizing deepened throughout the global economy.

Big companies got bigger in the name of shareholder value.

Trillions of dollars of corporate mergers and acquisitions put a half million North Americans out of work – and then, these transactions portending greatness failed.

Eighty per cent of them. Whence the vision of us – business people so clear-headed and definite – we walked like the blind without their wisdom.

Motorola announced last week it was laying off several thousand people but comforted shareholders that the company would meet its earnings target. But is that false comfort?

Studies have shown that companies which made their bottom-line through mass lay-off's lagged those companies which did so through new revenues and customer success.

These were companies which succeeded the old fashioned way – making money through a sale-and-purchase not through financial re-engineering.

On top of all this, Statistics Canada affirmed the news.

After years of mass lay-offs in the name of productivity and shareholder value, the economy was less not more productive.

Shareholder value was shaken across several sectors of trading on exchanges in this country and elsewhere.

In this context, in the face of these events, we are navigating (as business people and as health professions) two other great trends.

Like never before, for competitive reasons, business today depends upon the consistent, sustainable mental performance of employees, managers and executives.

The reason is this: innovation is a key determinant of corporate success, a competitive edge. It is also a mental function. In this light:

- The capacity of people to think underlies the capacity of companies to be innovative and therefore competitive.
- And today our minds not our backs, arms and legs do the heavy lifting of business. Employers today are looking for mindsets as much as skill sets among the people they hire.

In the words of the CEO of Pepsico – mindsets build businesses.

Today, it takes about 45 minutes to produce a ton of steel. It used to take several hours.

The difference? Human innovation facilitated by information technology.

Cars today come off the assembly line with more microchips than sparkplugs -- their competitive value defined mostly by the mindsets of people who build innovative thought content into their safety, efficiency, and design features.

Just as the software revolution spawned its “age of unreason,” so too has it spawned the economy of mental ingenuity. And from this great ocean has risen the miracle of mass customization.

In business today, the way people relate to each other is more important than how machines relate to each other. Don Tapscott calls that “relationship capital” manifest in the form of on-line partnerships and alliances.

In business today, people have to learn new ways of approaching their job conceptually – linear thinking must be un-learned. We can all be visionaries. And in the future, to be employable, we might have to be.

### Mental Health Force

In today’s information economy, mental capacity and good health empower and enrich the key asset of business – intellectual capital.

The EAP professional is a critical source of that value-added. Be proud of that.

The mental wellbeing of the work force mediates the forces of success or failure in business today. From this is born the “mental health force” of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

That said, what is mental health? For a definition, we don’t need to look into a medical book. Just look at the recruitment ads appearing in the paper every day.

Businesses are recruiting mental health (even if we don’t know it) because they want people who can think, communicate, learn and grow.

Mental health is the ability to meet our obligations and challenges, adapt to change and adversity, share not hoard, give credit not blame, relate well to others, lead by example.

Mental health in the work force of a global, knowledge-based economy becomes the ultimate productivity weapon.

In these terms, the business case for mental health by definition becomes many other things – it becomes the case for reducing stress at work, the case for distributing work fairly, and it also becomes:

- The case for helping employees get off the treadmill – where they tire not because they are being asked to do too much – but too much at once.
- The case for helping employees get free of randomly changing priorities and too many meetings.

- The case for liberating employees from the enslavement of e-mail and fostering personal communications face-to-face.
- The case for giving employees sufficient control over the daily tasks of earning their daily bread. The absence of such control is a greater risk to the cardiac health of today's work force than smoking.

The business case for mental health means punishing not rewarding office politics.

The business case for mental health means removing the sources of perceived unfairness at work. People problems – low morale – can predict a large company's financial performance three years in advance.

The business case for mental health is not about executives and managers doing the right thing for people – although that's good – it is about them doing the smart thing for their business; and, frankly, knowing what the alternative costs them.

### Significant Costs

I have new numbers on the economic costs of mental health problems in Canada and beyond.

Two years ago, the Roundtable estimated the cost of mental illness to be \$16 billion a year in Canada. We now believe that number is beyond \$30 billion annually.

What's changed?

Historically, Health Canada and others have dramatically under-estimated the non-treatment costs of mental disorders by nearly half.

Historically, the cost of addictions has not been included in the estimates of the cost of mental illness – when logically it belongs there.

Historically, we didn't have the data upon which to assess the effects on business and economic productivity.

And, the experts believe there has been an absolute growth in the prevalence of mental disorders.

In North America, we now believe that mental disorders and addictions are costing Canada and the U.S. just short of \$330 billion a year (U.S.)

And we believe that two thirds of those costs are coming out of business and the economy not out of our health care systems.

Have we bottomed-out yet? We don't know.

## Kids Under Attack

According to the World Health Organization, mental disorders are spreading and attacking the younger segments of our population with greater zeal.

I mentioned earlier, the average age of onset of anxiety disorders is age 12 in Canada. Depression is age 23; substance abuse, 18.

These numbers tell us a stark truth.

Canadians are getting mentally ill and addicted earlier younger than the populations of our major trading partners.

Notably, the diseases of grown-ups are becoming the diseases of their children including high blood pressure found in greater numbers of kids than ever before.

Let's remember – depression, anxiety and substance abuse often go hand-in-hand. And if mental health and addiction problems are getting younger, they are also becoming more widespread.

The lifetime prevalence of depression, anxiety and substance abuse breaks out along these lines –

48 per cent of the population in the United States;  
 41 per cent in the Netherlands;  
 38 per cent in Germany;  
 37 per cent in Canada;  
 36 per cent in Brazil;  
 20 per cent in Mexico;  
 And 12 per cent in Turkey.

Canadians need a wake-up call.

- This country has the third worst teenage suicide rate in the world today and
- With the United States, we have more kids more distressed than many of our closest neighbours.
- Are stressed-out adults stressing-out their kids? Is road rage and air rage and bullying in the workplace of our kids – school – the signs of a frustrated, exhausted society showing its anger and frustration?



- Unable to take flight from their lives, have we decided, in a very personal way, to fight for them? A fight being, it seems, which is being fought on the picket lines at garbage drop-off stations as we speak.

### The Business of Business

Let there be no mistake about it – the emotional health of our kids and their parents – which is all of us – is the business of business. Like it or lump it.

These are the times in which we live. Dickensian in nature – the best of times, the worst of times. And EAP professionals, I tell you this, will play a definitive role in deciding which ultimately it turns out to be.

Now, more than ever, we need the health of employees to be established – without a shadow of doubt – to be the business of business and reflected in investment patterns.

Let us deliver this message together.

Now, more than ever, we need an affirmation of employee health and well-being as a fundamental plank in the economic agenda of this country.

Our Senior Chairman, Michael Wilson, made that point to the former Minister of Finance and will make it again to the current one.

Now, more than ever, we seek balance between our work lives and our family lives.

You provide a pathway to that quest in the work you do – each and every day.

Now, more than ever – in every walk of life – we need people we can trust.

This is the gold bullion of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace as businesses conduct a huge war for talent across continents and economies.

What you do – I tell you this – is, by definition, an act of trust which your clients embrace and an act of faith on your part in the fundamental dignity of the person.

Nothing less. That is what you do.

Your industry, like others, is itself going through a consolidation of some kind. Warren Shepell, the company, is a big player in the market. Your standards can become the standards of the day.

I see for you a future of real consequence to the plans of a growing number of CEOs who will join the Roundtable this year to open a new front in an old war.

- The new front is the business work place and market place.

- The old war is the war against mental illness.

Consider their words. Be nourished by them.

**Honorable Michael Wilson, President and Chief Executive Officer, UBS Asset Management** (Roundtable Senior Chairman)

“We are living in an information economy. It is a brain-based economy and a healthy mind is very important to the successful workings of this economy.”

**Don Tapscott, President, New Paradigm Learning Corporation**

“We need to understand that depression, schizophrenia and other mental disorders are just that – treatable illnesses, not failings of character.”

**Clay Coveyduck, Senior Vice-President (retired), Bank of Montreal**

“Each generation has faced its defining challenge. Two centuries ago, it was the plague. A century ago, it was diabetes. A half century ago, TB and polio. Two decades ago, another plague – AIDS. The early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be defined by our response to a different threat – a growing crisis in world mental health.”

**Robert Lord, Chairman, Canadian Society of Chartered Accountants**

“Mental illness is the health challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

**Nancy Hughes Anthony, President and CEO, Canadian Chamber of Commerce**

“Mental health and work is a bottom-line issue. Employers are losing their employees’ time and sometimes their focus.”

**Gordon Nixon, President and CEO, Royal Bank Financial Group**

“As a business issue, mental illness and addiction have a direct link to the capacity of people at every level of the organization to do the things we need them to do in an information economy – to think, to be creative, to have productive relationships and to be innovative. All are vital to our capacity to compete ... (and are) key to any corporation’s success including RBC Financial Group.”

**Tim Price, Chairman, Trilon Financial Corporation** (Roundtable Chairman)

“We simply must get our arms around this issue for sound business reasons. Let there be no mistake about that.

The voice for mental health at work is strengthening. And it will be heard next November 14<sup>th</sup> in a very particular way.

On that day, the Roundtable will hold a special meeting to examine a business and economic strategy on mental health in the knowledge economy.

The strategy will be described as a “*CHARTER*” to imply a shared sense of direction in the management of mental health and addiction issues – specifically in support of business and, (broadly) economic performance.

This special meeting of the Roundtable will be convened by the Roundtable in association with:

- The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health;
- The Institute for Work and Health
- The Canadian Chamber of Commerce

An outstanding line-up of business leaders will come together in the financial district to prepare the Charter for distribution worldwide.

We hope it becomes a seminal point in the promotion of mental health in the knowledge economy.

The line-up includes:

Honorary Chair:

- **John Evans, MD, Chairman of the Board, Torstar Ltd.**

Co-Chairs of this Special Meeting of the Roundtable:

- **Honourable Michael Wilson, Senior Chairman of the Roundtable, and President and CEO, UBS Global Asset Management;**
- **Don Tapscott, Co-Founder, Digital 4Sight; and President, New Paradigm Learning Corporation;**

Discussants:

**Paul Garfinkel, MD, President and CEO, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.** (Dr. Garfinkel is also Co-Chairman of the Roundtable itself.)

**Tim Price**, Chairman, Brascan Financial Corporation.  
(Mr. Price is Co-Founder and Chairman of the Roundtable)

**Maria Gonzalez**, Vice-Chair of the Roundtable, and President and CEO, Argonauta Strategic Alliances Consulting Inc. (Ms. Gonzalez will deliver a presentation on mental health and business alliances.)

Also:

**Lynton “Red” Wilson**, former Chairman and CEO of BCE and now Chairman of Nortel Networks.

**Nancy Hughes Anthony**, President and CEO, Canadian Chamber of Commerce, who will deliver keynote address at the meeting – setting out the principles of the Charter.

**Paul Godfrey**, President and CEO, Rogers Sports (and the Toronto Blue Jays). Mr. Godfrey is a founding member of the Roundtable and delivered a milestone St. Patrick’s Day speech on mental health and business in 2000.

**Richard Venn**, Chairman and CEO, CIBC World Markets, a founding member of the Roundtable and stronger advocate of mental healthcare and research.

**Hershell Ezrin**, Chairman and CEO of GPC International, a member of the Omnicom Ltd. family – one of the Fortune 500’s best-run companies. GPC has housed the Roundtable pro bono for the past 2 \_ years.

**Colum Bastable**, President and CEO of Royal LePage Ltd., also a founding member of the Roundtable. Mr. Bastable wrote the “forward” to the Roundtable’s “12 Steps To A Business Plan for Depression” released two years ago. These “12 Steps” will form the nucleus of the proposed Charter.

**Lieutenant-General Christian Couture**, Assistant Deputy Minister of Human Resources at Canada’s National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa. General Couture is leading a comprehensive mental health program for our Canadian Armed Forces.

**Jamie Anderson**, Managing Director for Mergers and Acquisitions, RBC Capital Markets. Mr. Anderson is a member of the CAMH board of directors and a strong voice for mental health in the community.

**Gaetano Geretto**, President and CEO of Gerling Global Life Reinsurance Company, a founding member of the Roundtable and leader in a sector which will have an important influence on the structure of specialized corporate health plans.

**And, I am pleased to announce: Rod Phillips**, newly-named President and CEO of Warren Shepell Consultants Ltd., a pioneering firm in the field of Employee Assistance

Programs (EAP). Mr. Phillips represents a new generation of leaders engaged in “opening a new front in the old war against mental illness.”

The proposed “Charter on Mental Health in the Knowledge Economy” will serve specific goals:

1. The reduction of business and economic costs associated with mental disorders in the labour force.
2. The promotion of productivity and innovation through the promotion of mental health on a large scale.
3. The defeat of social stigma associated with mental health issues.
4. HR policies of the future which put a premium on sustainable levels of the mental performance of employees in an economy where knowledge, innovation and relationship capital (a Tapscott concept) serve as rudiments of competitive success.
5. Group Health and EAP-based initiatives targeting mental health costs and trends in the workplace.

Particularly, the Charter will seek to advance specific concepts such as:

- A health-centred measurement of productivity to link job fulfillment and profitable output – a key factor in countering leading workplace sources of deleterious stress.
- A workplace quality of life standard which gives CEO’s and managers a tool to prevent the rooting of workplace cultures which compromise the mental well-being and perspectives of employees.
- Business-based management practices which inherently promote the mental well-being of the 21<sup>st</sup> century’s labour force, executive class and managerial community.
- Business education which equips future executives with the knowledge to manage human behaviours which impair the performance of individuals and organizations – and which may have a health origin, or influence.
- Use of the Internet to help defeat stigma once and for all.
- Workplace training to arm managers, supervisors and co-workers with the sensitivity and information they need to recognize the signs of mental distress among their colleagues and “direct reports” – and foster a culture of

understanding, through knowledge and a process of appropriate referral and support.

- A mental health leadership model for private and public sector CEOs and equivalents.

I might also report that the Roundtable and your colleagues are collaborating on several fronts:

In British Columbia, you are playing an instrumental role in the formation of the B.C. Business and Economic Roundtable on Mental Health.

My congratulations and gratitude to Lorene Tittler for her invaluable and determined commitment to that initiative.

And, later this summer, the company and the Roundtable will release a report on a business strategy to reduce the national absenteeism rate in the country of 8.5 days per employee in the labour force taking into account the impact mental health issues have on the question.

### **CLOSING**

Be they the worst of times or the best of times, they are exciting and worthy times. The opportunity has presented itself to affirm the value of investing in people and protecting that investment by protecting their health and well-being.

In most ways, in my judgment, that's the business you're in – protecting business investments in human capital, protecting the innovative capacity of business to ensure they produce the vital “thought content” of mass customized products and services of every kind in every part of the economy.

Strip all that away, however, and your business is the business of human dignity.

What you do – please understand this – can save lives.

What you do can save hopes and dreams

The old saying says: “If we don't have our health, what have we got?”

Not enough.

And what does business have?

A lot less.

Yours is a calling of economic significance and social value.

I envy you the weight of that purpose.

Now, more than ever, I said it before, we need what you do. We need who you are.

- 30 -

Refer: Donna Montgomery  
Administrator  
Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health  
200 King Street West, Suite 1702  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 3T4  
Phone: 416 598-0055 Fax: 416 598-3811