

## **HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE CASE OF THE COMPANY LOBLAW**

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#### **Abstract**

The purpose of the paper will center on functions that promote and protect equality within the organization, which has been once again voted as one of the top 100 companies in Canada, Loblaw's. This paper will utilize a publicly available version of their code-of-conduct documents that outlines that firm's commitment to equality within the workplace, and be contrasted with specific opinions of current employees of the aforementioned firm. The purpose will be to determine whether or not the firm's HR policies and commitment to equality are realized within any given work environment within their organization. We will take a look at the standards for employment and equal opportunities laws of Canada (Similar to chapter 3 in the book), with specific focus on the working environment and making sure it is inclusive and allows for equal opportunity for all peoples. This mostly focuses on equality of genders and women of which has the greatest emphasis within this paper, but will also briefly touch on visible minorities and those of the LGBTQ+ community. Finally, this paper will also look at ways the firm can improve itself, as there are many issues that are not made generally public despite it being voted as one of the top companies in Canada to work for.

**Key words:** HR, management, employee, employer

#### **OVERVIEW**

Loblaw Companies is a Canadian food conglomerate founded in 1919 by Theodore Loblaw and John Milton Cork. Currently, Willard-Gordeon Galen Weston (Jr.) is the owner of the multibillion-dollar firm which encompasses corporate and franchise supermarkets operating under 22 regional and market segment banners (including Loblaw's), as well as pharmacies, banking, and apparel. Loblaw's operates a private label program that includes grocery and household items, clothing, baby products, pharmaceuticals, cellular phones, general merchandise, and financial services. Loblaw's grocer product brands includes namely President's Choice as well as No Name, Joe Fresh, Everyday Essentials for cooking machinery, Red Rooster for Asian foods, T&T, Exact, Life, Sequest, Azami, Theodore & Pringle, and Teddy's Choice. (Wikipedia, 2021) Besides being a well-known brand, it is also known as being a company that uses its vast resources and position to promote corporate social governance.

Loblaws is considered one of the largest companies in Canada with almost 200,000 employees and an annual revenue for around \$51.859 billion CAD. The company encourages ongoing employee development through the extensive online Loblaw Virtual Learning Centre courses, and provides tuition subsidies for courses both related to and not related to their current position (from \$1,200 to \$2,500 annually). Moreover, the company provides academic scholarships for children of employees who study post-secondary studies (up to \$1,500) (Wikipedia, 2021). Not only is Loblaw companies one of the largest firms in Canada, it is also included in the list of Canada's Top 100 Employers (2021) (Yerema & Leung, 2021) It has held that position since at least the 2000s as well, cementing itself as a reliable and trustworthy company to work for.<sup>1</sup>

As for business strategy, Loblaw's Strategy and Execution methodology includes two main goals. The first is to reduce the cost by measurement and operational effectiveness, and the other is by separating its items by having its own name and stores. In addition to this, to extend their own name or emblem into multi-format approaches. Loblaw has used size and scale to win in terms of leadership. By using the income or the money taken as a profit, they are planning to maximize the share in the market, to have competitive advantage in price by improving value and own real estate for upcoming business opportunities.

Some research shows that Loblaw has advantages in a few key areas which help it to hold a leadership position among its competitors. This analysis is being made by using the VRIO (Value, Rarity, Imitability, and Organization) (Wikipedia, 2021) method. One of the advantages of Loblaws is that it has many valuable, rare, and especially inimitable resources. These are considered the leading factors among competitors. These factors have helped it to sustain low prices and strong supply chain management. What they are doing is Valuable, having rare and inimitable resources, and the last is trying to improve competitive advantage in organizing by investing the profit for the future development of business. (123 Helpme, n.d.) Lastly, they are also utilizing a method of sustainability by becoming pioneers in the introduction of self-serve and cash-and-carry grocery retailing in Canada, bringing them more in line with the most up-to-date service systems and technology. (Wikipedia, 2021)

## **HOW LOBLAWS IS VIEWED**

### **Why it is one of Canada's top 100 employers**

On November 12, 2021, Canada's one of the most read newspaper The Globe and Mail announced Canada's Top 100 Employers for 2022. "Canada's Top 100 Employers" is the country's biggest national competitive project where Canada's best employers are chosen based on eight criteria each year. "These criteria are (1) Physical Workplace; (2) Work Atmosphere & Social; (3) Health, Financial & Family Benefits; (4) Vacation & Time Off; (5) Employee Communications; (6) Performance Management; (7) Training & Skills Development; and (8) Community Involvement" (Canada's Top 100 Employers (2022), n.d.).

Other than being the largest retailer that has made Loblaws into being on this list for many years in a row, and in our specific case 2021 and for 2022, what other important criteria that made Loblaw to be in this list? As many companies have tried to introduce relief programs,

Loblaw had two big donations to help Canadians during hard times of pandemic. One of the donations was \$5 million gift cards to Food Banks Canada, Second Harvest, and Community Food Centres Canada to help Canadian people who need to access good and fresh food. This donation has been essential for people who have less access to fresh food, and this makes company's image look good in public eyes. Another donation was made by the President's Choice Children's Charity to help school children to have access to good nutrition after nutrition programs being closed during pandemic in Canada (Yerema & Leung, 2021)

So where does public value come from? A company can serve the public value if it understands the public needs of a country which they are trying to be successful in. When public needs are understood, it brings the company a level of social responsibility where that company finds the shared value with the public. When those are combined it creates a good public value where success is highly possible. However, a company needs to keep maintain and serve to public value if it wants to be successful for decades (Meynhardt, 2019). Thus, companies need to keep up with trends and happenings in society. That is why, Loblaw also responded to the Covid-19 pandemic problems where it helped to the public with donations which showed that sharing the same values and being next to the Canadian society during hard times are part of its public duty and Loblaw is serving to the common good with public. Other than donations, Loblaw has also provided work from home to the employees where being on-site has not been necessarily needed. The company also provided safe working environment to the workers who must be on site during work hours. Those conditions and donations are one of the few reasons why Loblaw is chosen as one of Canada's Top 100 Employers (2022) and Greater Toronto's Top Employers (2021) (Yerema & Leung, 2021). "These awards show that we are consistently one of the best workplaces in Canada." (Mary-Alice Vuicic, Executive Vice-President, Human Resources and Labour Relations, Loblaw Companies Limited, 2015).

Loblaws has an A+ rating by Canada's Top 100 Employers in the category of Community Involvement with their Covid-19 pandemic responses and other charity donations and volunteering where they donate to many organizations, including helping with ending childhood hunger and women's health issues. Loblaw has A+ rating on Physical Workplace category where online carpool sign-up, free parking, electric vehicle charging stations are provided. Loblaw's other A ratings are in the category of Employee Engagement & Performance and also Training & Skills Development. With 360 ° feedback option, co-workers and managers can provide feedback on employee's performance to review the workplace productivity. There is also an option to review the employers which workers can provide feedback about their managers. Bonuses and rewards are provided to the employees with a good individual and group performances and for their long serving time. Consultant surveys are held every six months. Loblaw provides online trainings for employee development and productivity through Loblaw Virtual Learning Centre and pays from \$1,200 to \$2,500 annually internships for the trainings of the employers. In the category of Financial Benefits & Compensation with rating A, Loblaw Optical, PC Mobile, PC Financial Pet Insurance, PC Home and Auto Insurance and so on provides employees with discounted products and benefits. Defined contribution (DC) pension and life & disability insurance are provided as part of long-term savings and long-term planning.

Thus, moving away from an outsider's view of the company we must next establish whether or not the label placed upon the company as a top 100 employer is justified, especially when equality is taken into consideration. To do so, first we will need to take a look at the HR policies and goals of the company from the top, then look into the lower levels by utilizing information obtained with an employee, complimented by reviews found online about the company. Doing this will establish whether the company really does have the qualities of what a top employer should have.

## **LOBLAW'S HR PART**

### **Upper Management View**

For the following section we will take more direct look into the company by first looking at the view of upper management and how they handle the company. Following which, how employees on the ground level are affected and given protection, or lack thereof as will be discussed. Finally, we'll discuss what steps the company needs to do in order to make sure their actual policies and intentions are upheld and adhered to.

To support the earlier mentioned philosophy in which they hold, Loblaw's has created and publicly distributed a relatively detailed Code of Conduct which upholds their inclusivity, thus making it clear that all peoples from all walks of life can work in a comfortable environment. The Code outlines a few key points that relate to their core values, of which revolve around inclusivity and a commitment to a safe and hostile-free work environment. The key points in their code include: Human Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion; accessibility; alcohol and drugs at work; violence, harassment, and discrimination; health and safety; conflicts of interest; and gifts and entertainment.

According to their Code of Conduct, keeping in line with the core values related to corporate social responsibility, they mention the need to "promote a workforce that is reflective of the Canadian population at all levels of the organization." (Limited, 2020, p. 13) In this case it is referring to accessibility and in supporting the needs of those living with some form of disability. What this entails specifically is providing any given person's equal opportunity for employment, offering special services, providing accommodations where necessary for those with mobility impairment, and welcoming services animals in all of their locations. Moreover, they are also committed to creating e-learning training for "making [their] workplace more accessible to understand how to accommodate people with disabilities." (Limited, 2020, p. 13)

Within the same report, Loblaw's points out other policies in which it adheres to including human rights, diversity, and inclusion. Their goal and focus is in embracing a work culture which promotes and maintains these ideologies across all of their stores and offices. The Code itself puts emphasis on these commitments, and describes what steps they are taking to maintain them. In concurrence with promoting human rights, they also have taken a stance against violence, harassment, and discrimination by enacting a policy of zero tolerance when it comes to any form of harassment, and any form of discriminatory behavior. This code of conduct does have merits and does appear to be working, since Loblaw's is also on the list of "Canada's Best

Diversity Employers (2021)” which tries to give equal opportunities to minorities, LGBTQ+ members, and women where they choose talented individuals (Yerema & Leung, 2021). With Respect as a main value, Loblaws teaches to respect and work in harmony in the workplace. These match employment laws related to equality and inclusion in the workplace in Canada which outline the necessity for employers to follow specific rules in determining benefits, opportunities and rights of its employees. Those belonging to any of the following: women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities are defined in these laws. (Government of Canada, 2021) So, if Loblaws was awarded Canada’s best diversity employer then it would have to adhere to these standards.

### **Employee View (Interviews)**

Despite the glorified and somewhat honorable HR policies upper management may believe they have, the reality is that the policies often fall flat and don’t set out what they were intended to do, at least mostly. This was discovered after interviewing a Loblaws employee and a manager working for the Quebec branch, known as Maxi. The interviewees shed a light on the company, effectively pulling off the company’s façade and exposing a litany of issues within the organization, either through direct criticism, or lack of a full understanding.

For the following part, we’ll delve into two interviews that were conducted to really understand what happens inside the company. We will look closely at the questions asked and dissect each part, and discuss why the question was asked, what the answer was, and what this means for Loblaws as a firm and how effectively its policies of equality actually are. For context, both the employee and the manager interviewed are women, and both worked in the service department for well over 30 years. The employee is Swedish born but moved to Canada a long time ago, and the manager is French Canadian. Two people were interviewed to make help ensure less bias and to paint a more rounded picture of the firm from two different standpoints. The manager retired only in February due to personal problems, but she is quite knowledgeable and fully understands the inner workings of the firm. Also, the manager’s English communicative ability limited her answer length. As for the interviewees, they were not showed the questions in advance, and answered them in succession over Facebook.

### **What is your general feeling when you hear the word “Loblaws (Maxi)”?**

This question was meant as a warm-up, basically trying to elicit a general feeling when the company’s name is brought up and see if the employee is proud or ashamed to work there. The employee’s answer itself was positive enough, they talked about the competitiveness of the brand and the fact that that kind of job could appeal to young students who need a flexible schedule and a decent pay check given their limited experience. However, they also mentioned that it is clear you will not become rich working with them, which does seem to highlight a slight glass ceiling and a lack of mobility of any kind. Given that the firm is unionized, which the employee later talked about, and that a pay scale is set with a pretty low maximum, it does little to motivate employees. Regardless, the employee mentioned that “you could do much, much, worse ... working for a company like Loblaws. So clearly, it does have some benefits over its competitors. The manager on the other hand commented on a lot of the good that they

company has to offer, including vacations, sick days, etc. She didn't really mention much in the way of negatives.

**As a woman, do you feel you are provided and given equal opportunities compared to your male coworkers?**

The next few questions really got into the point of the paper, concerning with equality in the workplace. For the most part the question speaks for itself, getting straight to the main topic concerning women in the workplace. Like the first question, the answer had a mix of both strengths and weaknesses within the organization's service level, with more positives coming from the manager. In terms of outward discrimination, Loblaw's has strict control of it and in the words of the employee, "gender issues and discrimination as far as gender is concerned is 'a thing of the past' within the Loblaw corporation." However, at this point there is a caveat in that both interviewees did mention that men were better at making their voice heard, and although there is no explicit sexism, there is some implicit. If women need to work harder to make their voice heard, this means there is somewhat of an imbalance of power. Additionally, the employee goes on to mention that the departments are still, for the most part, gender divided with women often working in the service department which has fewer opportunities and a lower pay compared to those who stock shelves or work in other grocery departments. This is an issue similar to the comparable pay topic in the HR management: *Gaining a Competitive Advantage* book wherein nurses make substantially less money than other jobs, but where between 89% and 92% of nurses are women. (Raymond A. Noe, 2019, p. 489) Pay disparities between men and women, despite being roughly equal in quantity, highlights the unfortunate reality that women tend to pay lower-paying service jobs. This will also be discussed later in a bit more detail when we talk about Loblaw's in a Canadian context.

**Are there any policies that you know of, to protect women in the workplace?**

This part revealed some slightly more shocking, and rather disturbing, reality of working a service job. The manager was not as knowledgeable on this part, which may come down to the lack of communication between upper and lower management. This is an issue that will be brought up a few times within this paper as it exposes a big issue within the firm. Where the problem lies is with how the employee answered the question. She remarked that real protection is minimal, and recounted a horrendous account of being grabbed on her bottom by a customer. She subsequently filed a complaint, to which was met with disparaging responses such as "[you] asked for it [and are] too nice." She further recounted another cashier being yelled at and slapped in the face by a customer, then told by management that she "had to learn to be nicer". The employee further pointed out that there is little protection after work as well, after closing hours at night. Little concern is given to the safety of the female employees. The employee finally mentioned that, and with other reasons, because of how managers act that it is still a man's world. This is a far cry from the kind of rhetoric mentioned within the code-of-conduct that has been put together from management, and their position of a top 100 employer. Moreover, this really explains what a lack of knowledge about protection policies for women means. If store managers are not aware of them, how can they know what to do in these situations?

**As someone whose first language is not English or French, do you feel you are treated equally?**

The next question was asked specifically to the employee due to their not being Canadian born. We also inquired whether or not the employee is treated equally compared to English speakers and, more importantly, French speakers. Quebec and Quebec businesses are well-known for having issues with racism or discrimination towards non-native French speakers (Especially those not from France or Quebec). Although the store she works for is usually accepting, she did recount some problems with French coworkers / managers whom have disrespected her directly. The employee also recounted an event when two French employees decided to talk about this employee in front of her, despite her understanding French clearly. In general, managers and store directors in Quebec are more often French Quebecois rather than English. This is also a problem that has persisted for quite some time, and doesn't show signs of disappearing.

**Are people with disabilities, from LGBTQ+, or other from other countries treated equally?**

This one replaced the previous question and was asked to the manager. We just wanted to see whether or not the firm was generally accepting of people from all walks of life. Her answer was discrete but she did mention specifically that, for example, people with autism have been hired and can give them work to provide for themselves, gain experience and have a regular life.

**Do you like the company's HR policies, and what are the weaknesses?**

As for this last question the employee mentioned that female managers do need to be stronger to get anywhere. As we discussed, this is a repeat of the employees earlier comment, and corroborated by the manager's, when they said female employees and managers need to worker harder to have their voices heard compared to the male employees. But besides that, most generally the genders are treated "equally". The manager concurred for the most part, and said that the HR policies were good and gave opportunity for promotions, which can be inferred as being equal between sexes. The reason for emphasis on equally is due to the fact that there seems to be some conflicting information between the interviewee's answers. At times women need to work harder, it is a man's world, and that women more often have to work in the lower paying service department. All of which contradict the statement of equality.

**Other employee comments**

Even though Loblaws' has released official statements about the steps toward equity, it is quite easy to find evidence to the contrary especially regarding moral and ethical conditions in the company's stores. Looking at the "Glassdoor" website we can find a lot of negative feedback related to poor management of the company.

Here are a few statements from former, current, and contracted employees:

- Former employee - “no advancement structure, Poor management and Low salary” (September1, 2016).
- Current contractor more than 5 years - Poor management and very poor culture and values (October7, 2020).
- Current employee more than 5 years - Poor management, corporate does not know what happens on the ground (September19, 2020).
- Former employee less than 1 year – Poor management and upper management do not care about employees (December11, 2019)
- Current employee more than 3 years – Toxic environment and poor management. (Glassdoor, 2021)

Even the earlier interviewed employee mentioned that lower management tend to be the problem, and also described how many employees believe that the company’s focus on “good pay” is a bit vague and is really mixing up the difference between “good pay” and “competitive pay”. Interestingly, competitive pay is exactly what the interviewed manager said about her pay, so it is unclear whether that actually means good or not.

In short, we can find out the problems which affect these employees who are often working long hours, just slightly above minimum wage (depending on the years of employment), and a less than satisfactory work-life balance (depending on the region). Thus, it is clear to see that there is a distinction that needs to be drawn between what upper management states publicly and officially, vs what the truth holds. So, whether it is pay, or more specifically a lack of equality among genders, it appears that the problem lies either with a less-than-reliable store level management class, or the lack of communication between the two. This will come up later when discussing how to solve the problems within the company to better improve equality of work.

## **LOBLAWS AS A CANADIAN ENTITY**

Next, a breakdown of the legal system in Canada is needed in order to fully understand the operations of the company in a national standard. This will then finally be compared to the realities mentioned in the previous section. In Canada human resource management standards and regulation is different and has its own peculiarities. Moreover, there are some differences in province Quebec. Below we will discuss some details.

### **Occupations among Women and Men**

According to statistics, women accounted for a little less than half of the workforce in 2011, (48.0 percent). Women aged 15 and up were most likely to work in sales and service occupations (27.1%), followed by business, finance, and administration (23.1%). Education, law, and social services (24.6 percent); and administration (24.6 percent) (24.6 percent). Community and government-related services (16.8%) (Figure 5). Men, on the other hand, were



more likely to work in trades, transport and equipment operators, and related jobs, accounting for 25.5 percent of the total. Sales and service occupations (18.7%); and managerial occupations (13.9 percent). (CPHR, 2016) The point on service is important when considering the disparities between jobs and pay within Loblaws which was anecdotally supported by the employee interviewee when she mentioned that cashiers (mostly female) made less than grocery stockers (mostly male). It seems to be a nation-wide percentage where women work more in service than men. Although stocking shelves is still service, they still are also responsible for operating equipment in the back-store such as the fork lifts and cranes. This is rarely done by female employees, and thus eludes to a problem in equity of work.

### **Employment Equity**

In Canada according to employment equity of employees are divided into categories. It promotes equal equity for the following workers.

1. Women
2. Indigenous people
3. Persons with disabilities
4. Members of visible minorities.

Discrimination is, at least legally, prohibited in the province of Quebec. This encompasses any form of discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, and disability, as well as civil status, political convictions, language (although this is an ironic one for multiple reasons), social condition (for example, poverty), and family status. The aforementioned irony comes in when thinking about the province of Quebec since the government has a history of trying to pass laws to strengthen French, and to indirectly discriminate against the English. And, as mentioned from the interview, the French speakers at Maxi do sometimes discriminate. On each of the points concerning discrimination, employees must be supplied with accommodation, as long as the accommodation does not “impose an undue hardship on the employer”.

While most firms in Canada are subject to provincial employment laws, these clauses are common across the country. In general, provincial law is followed in Canada, similar to the US. Canadian law is only emphasized when it comes to interprovincial services, which includes interprovincial transportation, shipping and telecommunications, as well as national media and banks. For the most part all provinces have some kind of legal system that emphasizes labor regulations, employee health and safety laws, and human rights standards. The main legal distinction is with Quebec since it uses a civil law system based on the French system, whereas the rest of Canada uses a common law system. (Smith, 2015)

What type of employees are protected by common law?

Legally speaking, Canada has divided labor into three distinct types: independent contractors, dependent contractors and employees. All employees under common law have the right and entitlement to: overtime pay, vacation entitlements, and leave of absences. Dependent

contractors also have exact common law rights, which includes reasonable notice on termination. However, independent contractors do not have these same rights and entitlements. (ICLG, 2021)

### **Are employees protected against discrimination?**

Employees are protected by under human rights legislation and Common law in Canada. Prohibited forms of discrimination include, but not necessarily limited to, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, criminal convictions and marital and family status. If employees believe that they have been discriminated against in violation of human rights legislation may file a complaint with the applicable human rights commission. (ICLG, 2021)

### **How are standards and laws of employment applied to Loblaws?**

According to employment standards, Loblaw respects the human rights of employees, customers and supply chain partners and members of communities. Loblaws has a policy of not subjecting worker to any form of verbal, physical or sexual abuse or harassment in the workplace. And to reiterate, no discrimination in the hiring treatment of workers on the basis of sexual orientation, race, colour, age, gender, caste, social background, ethnicity, disability, pregnancy, religion, marital status and others. However, and this cannot be stated enough, there seems to be quite a few cracks in all of this.

As deep research has been done, it is based on the interviews of Loblaw employees and internet website analysis and other internal and external analysis, following facts have been detected: the company does not comply with Canadian standards of employment. As some issues have been found and discussed above. The part in which revealed that the employee interviewee talked about having her butt grabbed by a customer is the issue. She put in a complaint but the company did not take any measures or escalate the issue to upper management, the HR department, or the union.

## **WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR LOBLAWS**

### **The problems highlighted**

To recap, the code of conduct states what the upper management expects, but in reality there is a miscommunication between upper and lower management. Moreover, sexual harassment claims go unnoticed, and a slight bias in jobs available for genders is apparent which leads to a disparity in pay. There are some issues between the French and everyone else within Quebec, which further highlights the core issues within the firm.

So given everything the question remaining now is, is it justified to label Loblaws as a top employer? Well, the laws themselves have been bent but not necessarily broken. Ignoring a harassment, although unacceptable, doesn't mean the company will be shut down. It does however highlight an issue which left unchecked might lead to problems in the future. Given the strict laws in Canada concerning protection in the workplace, there is no reason it should be ignored. Furthermore, as for the other issues such as language discrimination / bias, that

tends to be a somewhat accepted part of being in Quebec, and often ignored by the rest of Canada. Blaming an entire company for its branch in Quebec which doesn't have full control of its lower management isn't really the fault of the entire entity. That being said, the online complaints were not limited to Quebec, so it is clear that mismanagement occurs in many locations. Even though they do not openly discuss discrimination in the workplace, it is clear that a certain level of poor management does indeed affect the company. Moreover, and to reiterate, given that the interviewed manager was not sure about policies to protect women does show that there was some kind of break in communication which may have led to a lack of intervention. Therefore, the company really does need to improve this situation if it truly wants to be seen as a company with commitment to CSG, and as a firm that truly treats all employees equally. All of this together makes it seem that their 'code of conduct' is not effective and either needs to be changed, or more properly conveyed to employees and the managers directly in charge of them. Especially, in Quebec.

Additionally, it is hard to judge whether it really deserves being called a top 100 company without analyzing every other company on the list. 100 is still a large number, and Loblaws is also one of the largest actual companies in the country. It would be hard to ignore the firm's economic position and affect on the economy, and that their company is held to a higher standard being that it is a Canadian owned firm. This is probably why they have spent so much time worrying about Covid19, to make sure that image is upheld outside the company. That being said, the employee interviewee did mention later that the Covid19 relief benefits were due to end soon, which have overall not helped essential workers as much as it should have.

### **Steps the firm still needs to take and conclusion**

It is clear that after considering Loblaws' Code of Conduct and matching it with how some employees feel on the ground level, that there is a discrepancy on how upper and lower management view the firm. To address this, upper management would have to make some fairly significant changes to the systems, and make sure that these changes are properly conveyed to lower management. Training of some kind of floor level managers (those in the stores themselves, such as our interviewee) should be implemented so that they are fully aware of the policies and procedures to enforce them that are used within all Loblaws stores. Furthermore, this information needs to also be passed down to the employees themselves so that they are also aware of the procedures, to avoid anyone being ignored. It could also be beneficial to put in place policies that are actually directed towards everyone including customers; violence and any form of sexual harassment should be strictly monitored and resolved, regardless of who commits them. If the police need to be involved, so be it. This new policy absolutely must be made in conjunction with the previous improvement suggestion as it is essential that lower management are aware of procedures and how to handle different situations when they arise regardless of whether it is done by a customer or an employee.

A second major change that needs to occur definitely has to do with the disparity of genders within different departments. There is no reason other than an old-fashioned notion that women make better service representatives as opposed to men. Moreover, that women are likewise unable to work in the back-store and operate machinery. Companies are coming under a higher

level of scrutiny now than they have ever in the past, and is only a matter of time before a company like Loblaw's is attacked by SNS or other means for their inequalities and inequities.

If Loblaw's truly wishes to maintain itself as a top 100 employer it needs to address these issues head on. Further policies need to be enacted (which will move into other HR practices such as hiring and training) which should be fully understood and followed by all levels of management. Loblaw's cannot just throw around something like a code-of-conduct which is subsequently lost on those who actually need it, employees and lower management for all peoples regardless of gender, sexuality, religion, nationality, etc.

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**Directly transcribed interviews (Copied from Facebook)**

<b>Employee</b>	
1	<p>What is your general feeling when you hear the word Loblaws (Maxi)?</p> <p>Hmm.. Mega cooperation ... Maybe too branched out to be quite as successful as it was supposed to be in the beginning? But then again... "A loved child has many names", they say. Loblaw goes under a lot of names, as well as a lot of different price ranges. They sell everything from electronics, to fresh food; diapers to frozen dinners; Joe Fresh (clothing and cosmetics line) to no name and Presidents Choice brands. They have it all. Yes, they do have almost everything. They have their own credit card, banking, you can even book a trip with them. Loblaws is everything from high end to discount - even when it comes to pricing. Here in Quebec, they are quite successful as a company. The Maxi Division is considered to be the discount part of Loblaws, but have a pretty good selection of just about everything - depending on the size of the store. They may not have your favorite brand of canned food, but they always have a competitive substitute - both in quality and price. To work for a company as Loblaws, I must say you could do much much worse. You will not become rich working for them, but they are unionized, have a pension plan, as well as a health plan. These are things worth taking in to consideration. Also, I find, they are very flexible as far as students and their schedules are concerned. So yes... one could do much worse than working for a company like Loblaws.</p>
2	<p>As a woman, do you feel you are provided and given equal opportunities compared to your male coworkers? Why or why not?</p> <p>Loblaw is very good at this equality thing, I must say. Gender issues and discrimination as far as gender is concerned is " a thing of the past" within the Loblaw cooperation - which is a good thing. We have women as managers - just like we have male cashiers, and no one thinks anything of it. BUT.. there is a big BUT... It is much easier for a male to make his voice heard, and believed, than it is for a woman - still. Whether this is because of the old catholic upbringing or not, I will leave up to interpretation. Also, the staff in departments that are consider "gender driven", (such as cash versus grocery department), the cashiers earn less than the people working in the grocery department filling shelves. In Quebec, it is also much easier for a french person to move up than it is for someone with a non french family name or background. So Loblaw is not out of the woods yet, as far as equality is concerned.</p>
3	<p>Are there any policies that you know of, to protect women in the workplace?</p> <p>That was easy! 😊 The protection is minimal. if not not existing. A customer grabbed my ass. I reported it, and was told. that I had asked for it as I am too nice to the customers. Another cashier got screamed at, and slapped in the face, by a customer. She was told she had to learn to be nicer. No effort is made to make the female staff feel more secure walking to their cars, or waiting at the bus stop after closing., to give you a few examples. The stories I could tell... Even managers have overstepped and crossed the line. But if you report it, you pay the price - they usually don't. So in that aspect, it is still, very much, a mans' world - even at Loblaws. 😊😊</p> <p>I had incidents of religious nature, from customers, a couple of years ago. So called "New comers" from Europe. Thank God we had a store manager with a good head on his shoulders - even though he was very much french... Which leads us in to your follow up question...</p>
4	<p>As someone who first language is not English or French, do you feel you are treated equally?</p> <p>Am I treated equally? I must say that I am, most of the time, BUT... Let me give you an example: I happened to mention to Simon Legault (our present store manager) that I worked as a teacher at High School and the equivalent to CEGEP for 5 years before I came to Canada in 1984. This, I told him because we were discussing people lying to you, and how to tell they are. I told him I could tell, for the most part, if someone was lying to me, and gave that as one of the reasons to how I could tell. He just looked at me, threw his arms up in the air, and walked away. i have also had coworkers like Jocelyne, Christiane etc. talking about me, RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME, in French, not realizing that I did major in French language, and understand what they say. In our store in particular, there is a lot of language issues, as well as silly favoritism.</p>

5	The company is ranked in the top 100 employers in Canada, do you agree with this? Why?
	<p>Why would Loblaws be among the best 100 employers in Canada Good question! They demand, and expect, a lot of their managers. I don't think I am pushing it if I say that in becoming a manager for one of the departments in a store, is like joining a sect. They expect you to live, eat, and breathe your chosen profession. They will not ask you to do overtime - they will demand it of you, and question your loyalty if you don't. They have a somewhat warped idea of what the customers want from them, and don't really seem to "get it". But a few things, they do get. They let their employees be unionized. ( Not that the union does much but still...). The employees have a pension plan, and a medical insurance that also includes dental as well as vision. These details become more and more valuable the older we get. Other companies, like Walmart, may pay more, but they are not union friendly. They have been known to just simply close a store down because the employees tried to bring in the union. Why? I don't even know. Loblaws also hires a lot of students, and take their schooling seriously. They have scholarships, and try their best to adjust weekly schedules to the students and their availability They probably have other things too, but I am not involved enough with the company to really have cared to do the research. However, I have seen, on their company website, that there are a lot of things going on within the company that we may not have here in Quebec, or that nobody informs us of. That may be their worst fault: the lack of proper communication between head office and the employees. It is rare that they share information unless it comes as a demand of something. The daily meetings the store managers have with the employees are usually about numbers - as in sales. Only the managers and the head office would care about that. But at least we don't have to sing a song before opening the doors every morning like they do at Walmart and Future shop...</p>
6	Do you like the company's HR policies? And, is there anything in terms of policies or working equality that you think the company could still improve upon? Anywhere it has some weaknesses?
	<p>You know... everything looks good in writing. It is when the human factor comes in that things get messed up. I would personally like to know if it is the same rules across the board (as in every store and every province)? But it is my experience, as a whole, that they are pretty good at the equality between the genders. At least that. Yes, I find that the female managers have to be tougher, harder, and sometimes louder than the managers of the opposite gender to get the job done, but that is not a Loblaw problem per se. It is more the staff and the sometimes popular view on female management. The store manager we now have has a favorite expression: "I stand behind my managers". That is very honorable indeed but what about your staff? What about the people that work directly with the public? What about the people, the pillars and foundation of the store that constantly have to take the complaints, and the fall for the store and the company? What about them? Who is going to stand by them? Not this guy. The company gives every store manager a bonus every year, based on their spending. It is popular to save by cutting hours for the employees etc. That is not good management. Good management is taking care of your employees, and have their backs. Do that and they will take good care of the customers - as well as backing management. Give them a chance to express how they feel about certain things, how something could be changed to maybe the better etc. Maybe they know something you don't or haven't thought of. Think about it...</p>
7	You are still unionized right? The union doesn't help any with some of the topics we discussed earlier?
	<p>Could the union help me? No, they can't. Our union rep is still Andre Tessier. The laziest and most dishonest employee in the store. Everything is a joke to him, and he never has time to help in any way. Carmela is going to call the union tomorrow actually because of problems they have in a department we call PC Express. There, customers can order on line, come and pick it up or have it delivered. There are lots of stuff going on there. Fights with Simon over hours, favoritism and what have you. She has talked to managers etc. but nothing ever gets done so tomorrow she'll call the union, even though she doubts the will help. I have to agree with her. I lost over \$1000 in insurance pay back because of Covid and because they lost my claim. Since it is over a year old... Bye bye \$.</p>

<b>Manager</b>	
1	What is your general feeling when you hear the word Loblaw's (Maxi?)
	Loblaw is a good company to work for with a lot of advantages. - vacations - sick days - good insurance - 10% discount - share ownership plan - Students are able to have a good schedule depending on school - Managers have good bouses.
2	Do you like the company's HR policies?
3	As a woman, do you feel you are provided and given equal opportunities compared to other male managers? Why or why not?
	As a woman, I felt at the beginning you need to prove yourself more but with the year passing I find it changed. The women now are equally remunerate.
4	Are there any policies that you know of, to protect women in the workplace?
	sorry not as far as I know
5	Are people with disabilities, from LGBTQ+, or other countries treated equally?
	Yes everyone is treated equally even that Loblaw now has a program with autism person they give them a job so they can provide for themselves, earn some work experience and have a regular life.
6	Have you ever seen any discrimination at work? Is there any punishment for discrimination?
7	The company is ranked in the top 100 employers in Canada, do you agree with this? Why?
	Yes it's a good company - for students it's a great opportunity to work and get some experiences - as a director or manager the salary is competitive - they have good advantages
8	Is there anything in terms of policies or working equality that you think the company could still improve upon? Anywhere it has some weaknesses?
	I find the company has good HR policies and there's a lot of opportunity to get good promotions