

**Member:** Jean-François Pinsonnault

**Company:** SoGesPin Inc.

**What are you proudest of? Is there a success story you would like to share?**

In the early 90's I was recruited by a major Canadian Government Department as an OD practitioner and consultant to support the organization in successfully implementing major up-coming changes. I quickly realized that there were, unfortunately, many underlying issues and challenges that were hindering most of the intended changes from being successful. The main one was the presence of conflicts and differences of perspective within many groups and functions due to historical unresolved management and labour issues. At the time, whenever individuals or functions found themselves in conflict, the HR or Management responses was ineffective, i.e. if unionize then make a grievance, if not then go to human rights.

I set out to remedy this situation. At first, I asked to be supported financially in acquiring ADR skills. After being turned down, I set out to find an appropriate institution to get training. Then on a monthly basis and for over a year, I accumulated the required funds. During that time I read all the available literature so I can help individuals better manage their less complex challenges. By the end of the following year, I was certified as a mediator. For nearly two years, I offered my services to individuals and groups who were open to the idea of mediation. Though I was discovered, after a group of employees I had helped resolve their differences reported the success to the visiting HR executive, I was conveyed to his office and after a few moments of uncomfortable queries, he walked over to me, shaking my hand in appreciation. He was very happy to have such a resource at his disposal and for the many years that followed, I was able to support many individuals and groups find a resolution to their impasses, training along the way more interested individuals to support those in need.

Unless this has changed, I believe that mediation is a way of life in most if not all departments, agencies and crown corporations. I am happy to have been instrumental in bringing in a more positive conflict resolution culture for many individuals within the federal government.

**What is your biggest achievement to date — personal?**

Over a fourteen period, I was the principal caregiver to my elderly and mobility challenged mother. After a debilitating illness, and against the wishes of her doctors and my siblings, I followed mother's wish to go live in her own home. I organized her home and hired a live-in companion so she could live there comfortably for as long as she wanted. Every other weekend I would go and replace the live-in companion as well as during holidays. I regularly invite her to come and live with me. Her response was always the same "I'm not ready yet." One day, ten years later, she called me and

asked: "Is the offer still good." And of course, it was. She moved in with me in my home near Ottawa Canada and, during that time I was able, due to my closeness, to substantially improve her health by addressing the on-going challenges that had never been diagnosed by her country doctor in her hometown. Mother was diabetic and had cataracts. Medication and surgery gave her a new lease on life. Unfortunately (my) mother had a pre-disposition to strokes, and after the death of my older sister and several strokes, she passed away. I decided to write my memoirs – [www.lastingtouchbook.com](http://www.lastingtouchbook.com) - in memory of our journey together, with the hope of encouraging and influencing more sons and sons-in-law to take a much more active role in caring for their parents. Caregiving is not only a daughter's responsibility. Today, I know in my heart that having cared for mother permitted me to significantly improve her quality of life and be among our family for a much longer period.

### **What do you like most about your current role?**

Being semi-retired as an OD practitioner, trainer, and consultant as well as being affiliated with the Schulich School of Business, I am always excited and energized at the prospect of designing, developing and imparting leading edge perspectives and approaches as well as required behaviours of the 21<sup>st</sup> century leader. Having worked for over twenty years in the private sector as well as over 25 years in the public sector, I am always willing and open to sharing my knowledge and experience to up-coming leaders, especially new emerging leaders who want to make their organizations more effective and efficient for the future.

Leaders who have high EQ are more likely to be open to new and innovative ideas and to making current operations more effective, efficient while reducing cost. Who better to make suggestions to improve than those who actually do the work?