

HR options for action

**BUILD YOUR BUSINESS
AND COMMUNITY**



**Quality of Life
CHALLENGE**

HR OPTIONS FOR ACTION

“Our wages have always been high and turnover is low. It’s very important for us to pay our employees well, give them benefits and pay their MSP.”

Mandy Farmer, VP, Accent Inns



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background.....	2
Boost Employee Productivity.....	5
Reduce Turnover, Retain Staff.....	11
Develop Employee Knowledge ...	15
Increase Workplace Morale	19
Resources.....	9, 11, 17, 19

www.qolchallenge.ca

The Employer...

WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF LIFE CHALLENGE?

The Quality of Life CHALLENGE is a bold new way for all sectors of BC's Capital Region to work together to create a sustainably vibrant community. As part of the CHALLENGE, a group of local employers have formed the employer CHALLENGE.

WHAT IS THE EMPLOYER CHALLENGE?

The employer CHALLENGE is led by a group of local employers who know that healthy workers make for healthy businesses. They share a vision of a vibrant workforce in which workers earn a good income and can leave the cycle of poverty. They also envision a business community that is able to retain staff, enjoy greater productivity and increase its profits.

WHY TAKE UP THE EMPLOYER CHALLENGE?

In BC's Capital Region, more than 36,000 people of working age live below the Low Income Cut Off line. Of these, 18,000 work at least part of the year and 4,040 work full-time all year round. (Source: Statistics Canada, 2001, Custom Tabulation).

HOW CAN YOU TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE?

This booklet shares 50 actions employers can take to benefit their employees, the community and their businesses. The actions range from low cost one-time actions to more costly ongoing employee benefits.

WHO IS LEADING THE EMPLOYER CHALLENGE?

Bill Hartley Insurance
Bottle Depot
Brown's the Florist
Coast Capital Savings
Frontrunners Footwear
Level Ground Trading Ltd.
Milestone's Restaurant
Shady Creek Ice Cream Co.
Sierra Club of Canada: BC Chapter
Silver Threads Service
Small Potatoes Urban Delivery
Vancity
Vintage Hot Tubs

CHALLENGE

WHERE CAN YOU GO FOR MORE GREAT STORIES AND TIPS?

Sign up for the "employer CHALLENGE," the electronic newsletter, at www.qolchallenge.ca, or email info@qolchallenge.ca.

Local employers are featured in the "employer CHALLENGE," many of whose abridged stories are showcased in this booklet.

The screenshot shows the header of the "the employer CHALLENGE" newsletter, dated 20 July 10, 2005. The main article is titled "A Free Lunch Ain't Small Potatoes" and features a photo of a man holding a bag of potatoes. The article text describes SPUD (Small Potatoes Urban Delivery) as an organic home delivery grocery company that believes in sharing its success with its employees. It mentions that staff are paid to make each other lunch and that the company provides a healthy lunch and free produce. The article also includes a "Quick Facts" section stating that food bank use has increased 22.7% since 1997, and a "Get involved" section with contact information for the Quality of Life Challenge.

Acknowledgments

The Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria (Community Council) produced this booklet and takes full responsibility for its content.

Leadership Partners and supporters of the Quality of Life CHALLENGE, including the Government of Canada, have invested in the research and writing of this booklet.

Third Edition, May 2006

Suggested Price: \$5

Printed on 30% post consumer recycled paper.



The Bottle Depot's sales have increased 15 to 20 % annually since 1995. Owner D'Arcy Hipwell attributes the success to his outstanding staff and makes sure to treat them right.

The Bottle Depot offers competitive wages, generous bonuses, and a friendly environment. The company pays 80% of full-time staff's MSP and 80% of all staff's extended benefits.

"We have an incredibly good workforce and provide better service than anyone else in the industry," says D'Arcy.

Kelly Gorman started out working weekends while at university. Three years into her degree, she took a break from school and was promoted to depot manager.

While in university, the Bottle Depot accommodated Kelly's ever-changing schedule without complaint. "They work around school like no other place I've worked," Kelly says. "If employees stay it benefits the business."

TransitionalMedia

TransitionalMedia is an information technology company with heart. This is apparent in owner Paul Holmes' willingness to provide work experience opportunities to people on Employment Insurance.

In 2004, Joseph Williams was placed with TransitionalMedia by the Spectrum Community Job Centre for a one-month work term. Joseph was not paid a salary, but Spectrum did pay for child care and work travel costs. Now Joseph is a valued full-time employee at TransitionalMedia.

"Our living accommodations have changed from a cramped two bedroom apartment to a spacious three bedroom house," says Joseph. "The kids are much happier."

HOW TO... Boost Employee Productivity

“Staff are more productive if they’re happier and healthier.”

Darlene Hollstein, Cadillac Fairview



HR TIPS

- RE-EVALUATE WAGE SCALES TO MATCH HIGH COSTS OF LIVING IN VICTORIA
- HIRE A LOW INCOME PERSON FROM AN EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AGENCY
- PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY FOR STAFF TO DEAL WITH CHILDREN’S ILLNESSES
- DO AN ERGONOMIC ASSESSMENT OF YOUR EMPLOYEES’ WORKSPACE
- MATCH YOUR EMPLOYEES’ RRSP CONTRIBUTION BY A PERCENTAGE OF THEIR EARNINGS

Business Victoria

At Business Victoria, they take their employees seriously. With three weeks paid vacation upon hiring, partially paid volunteer time, and paid sick leave, employees at this non-profit organization are satisfied and committed.

Business Victoria hires and trains entry-level employees, which builds their staff team from the ground up. James was hired for a co-op work term at Business Victoria, and he has since been employed full-time.

As soon as he started work, Business Victoria encouraged James to develop his own project. Three months after he was hired, he ran Greater Victoria’s Small Business Week. “There is a lot of trust and responsibility,” James says. “They let you take on as much as you feel comfortable with. It’s okay to say no.”



Eighteen years ago, John started with Accent Inns as a night auditor. He was promoted to the front desk, then to assistant manager, and he has now worked as Accent Inns' regional sales manager for more than five years. "People can sense the pride I have in the company," John says.

Promotion from within is just the beginning. Accent Inns compensates employees with good wages (front desk employees start at \$11.00 an hour, and can earn up to \$14.60 after a year), a Christmas bonus, and by paying MSP premiums, extended health benefits and other perks.

"Compared to our industry, our wages have always been high, and our turnover is low," vice-president Mandy Farmer says.

"We have loyal customers who keep coming back, and they see the same friendly faces," president and CEO Terry Farmer says. "Our customers feel like they're coming home."

Brown's the Florist

Profits were down and costs up two years ago at Brown's the Florist. Worried, owner Chris Dysart opened her books to staff so they could see how quickly an extra gladiola or Gerbera daisy here and there added up. Chris challenged her staff to lower costs to where they should be, promising to share a third of the savings with them.

Profits at Brown's have risen steadily since then. The latest profit sharing cheque totaled almost 8% of staff's salary. "Staff are so much more involved, motivated and interested," Chris says.

Employee Krista Cox, who has worked in the floral industry for 18 years, agrees, "this is the best job I've ever had."

HOW TO... Boost Employee Productivity

“You have to follow the karma principle of business: like the business, you have to develop your HR organically, based on staffing needs.”

Rob Reid, Frontrunners Footwear



HR TIPS

- OFFER PROFIT SHARING
- IMPLEMENT A FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULE BASED ON YOUR EMPLOYEES' NEEDS
- CREATE A REWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM: GIVE EMPLOYEES COUPONS AND GIFT CERTIFICATES TO LOCAL BUSINESSES
- START AN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR STAFF'S KIDS
- MOVE EMPLOYEES QUICKLY FROM STARTING WAGE BASED ON THE ATTAINMENT OF SPECIFIC TRAINING OBJECTIVES

Munro's Books

Munro's Books employees share in the store's success. On an annual basis, approximately 50% of the store's profit is divided among staff according to the number of hours they have worked.

The policy encourages employees to work together to provide customers with efficient, quality service in the knowledge that they will benefit directly from the store's success as a business.

“We happen to think that profits are good,” says owner Jim Munro. “We're capitalists... it just makes sense to take good care of your employees.”



OA Solutions

How many technology companies can boast a turnover rate of next-to-nothing with a workforce of almost 100 employees? OA Solutions can, and part of OA's success comes from its open door policy.

"We have a very supportive and trusting environment," Vice President and COO Scott Petersen says.

Dave Jaycock, who was hired straight out of Camosun College, appreciates what he says is the low key and low stress environment at OA Solutions. "I feel comfortable here," he says.

Employee David Gaffney says, "We have a total open door policy."



Vintage Hot Tubs

At Vintage Hot Tubs, staff are hired for their potential, not their service background. John Smith, part-owner of Vintage Hot Tubs assesses the applicant's personality and drive, then trains them on the job.

Vintage has hired two homeless people, one of whom was older and had been out of the workforce for some time. He came to Vintage through Labour Unlimited, a temporary work agency. After two weeks of work, Vintage hired the employee and also helped him find a place to live.

The attention to human resources and hiring has paid off. "Our revenues have increased about 40% in the past year and a half," John says.

HOW TO... Boost Employee Productivity

“If you want to attract talent and you want people to buy into the company, you have to provide them the culture to grow and the atmosphere to be creative.”

Judy Hamza, Abebooks



HR TIPS

- GIVE NEW EMPLOYEES THREE WEEKS HOLIDAYS FROM THE DATE OF HIRE
- ELIMINATE SPLIT SHIFTS, WHICH INCREASE EMPLOYEE TRANSPORTATION AND CHILD CARE COSTS
- CREATE A PHONE-IN POLICY THAT ALLOWS EMPLOYEES' CHILDREN TO CHECK IN WITH THEIR PARENTS, AS NEEDED
- OFFER EMPLOYEES FREE OR DISCOUNTED GYM MEMBERSHIP OR YOGA PUNCH CARDS
- HELP AN EMPLOYEE PURCHASE A BICYCLE TO GET TO WORK

More Resources

US-based Workforce Management Magazine is an online and print magazine that is published every two weeks. The website also has a general forum, “Dear Workforce Q&A” and an international HR directory. www.workforce.com

The Government of BC Employment Standards Branch administers the *Employment Standards Act and Regulation*. The website has an Employers Corner to help employers better understand the act. www.labour.gov.bc.ca

The BC Public Service Agency Manager’s HR Toolkit provides managers and supervisors with the tools required to perform human resource functions. www.hrtoolkit.gov.bc.ca



Level Ground Trading

At Level Ground Trading, importer and roaster of fair-trade coffee, all employees equally share in two monthly bonuses: Fair Share, based on the company's revenue growth and Quality Assurance, based on overall order accuracy. In 2005, each staff member received \$1,080 in bonuses.

"Bonusing equally has flattened the hierarchy and provides a greater benefit to lower income staff," manager Laurie Klassen says.

Level Ground began paying for 100 percent of medical and dental benefits in January 2006, and recently initiated an RRSP matching program. "We prove to the business world that you can be fair and you can succeed," Laurie says.

Level Ground's sales increased 25% last year. "If we all work hard, we benefit equally in that success," Laurie says.

Smuggler's Cove Pub

Some staff have worked for more than a decade at Smuggler's Cove, a popular neighbourhood pub. "Brian gives us a lot of freedom to pursue our goals and dreams," says server Michelle Boyd, who has worked at Smuggler's Cove for 13 years. Like many employees, Michelle takes time off to travel but always returns to the company.

Business is good because, as Brian says, "the staff have created a cozy neighbourhood pub atmosphere. Customers keep coming back."

Smuggler's Cove also offers employees a medical and dental plan through the Alliance of Beverage Licensees. "Employees come first in this type of business," Brian says. "You can't do it any other way."

HOW TO...

Reduce Turnover, Retain Staff

“We prove to the business world that you can be fair and you can succeed. Profit doesn’t need to be at the expense of people.”

Stacey Toews, Level Ground Trading



HR TIPS

- PROVIDE AN EXTENDED HEALTH AND DENTAL PLAN
- BUY INTO A GROUP INSURANCE PLAN WITH OTHER BUSINESSES, IF A PLAN FOR YOUR BUSINESS ALONE IS TOO EXPENSIVE
- PROVIDE EMPLOYEES WITH A DISCOUNT ON GOODS/SERVICES PURCHASED AT YOUR BUSINESS
- PROVIDE LONG TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES
- OFFER SPOUSAL AND FAMILY BENEFITS

More Resources

The certified human resources professional designation (CHRP) is a nationally recognized level of achievement in the human resources field. For more information on the CHRP designation, visit www.bchrma.org/content/chrp. Listed here are some local CHRP certified HR consultants:

Darlene Bailey, 389.0699, dbailey@wcginternational.com

Lori Fitzgerald, 655.0474, lori@hrgbc.com

Eileen Harper, 888.5133, tallsky@shaw.ca

Richard Joyce, 250.743.4810, rickjoyce@shaw.ca

Denise Lloyd, 385.7784, lloydmgmt@shaw.ca



The commutes are easy and employees are happy at Abebooks.com. For starters, staff receive \$50 each month for a bus pass if they decide to take public transport, plus the company provides free parking and secure bicycle racks.

\$50 a month toward bus transportation saves employees up to \$600 a year, which HR Manager Judy Hamza says makes a huge difference, especially to co-op students and newly hired staff.

“The bus pass was really nice during my co-op terms,” communications specialist Jennifer Thorimbert says.

Abebooks also pays for MSP from the moment that employees start. “A lot of students just coming out of university are having to pay this for the first time,” Judy says.

The way Abebooks treats its staff increases productivity. “Happy people do good work,” Judy says.

Island Savings Credit Union

Island Savings Credit Union is a company that cares about its 325 employees' well-being. When a staff member is faced with a life crisis, the Compassion Fund helps them out, confidentially and quickly.

The fund is generated from a federal rebate of Employment Insurance premiums. Employees are granted up to \$2,000 a year and are not asked to repay the funds.

“Mary” has worked at Island Savings for 12 years. When her ill husband's disability insurance did not kick in for more than six months, Mary says the Compassion Fund “helped keep our bill payments current and put food on the table.” She says, “good karma definitely comes back to Island Savings in the form of loyal employees and loyal members.”

HOW TO...

Reduce Turnover, Retain Staff

“By implementing strategies that increase employee satisfaction, hopefully employees stay here longer because they’re happy with their jobs.”

Karin Bruce, SPUD



HR TIPS

- PAY ALL OR PART OF YOUR EMPLOYEES’ MSP PREMIUMS
- NEGOTIATE FREE PARKING FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES WHO DRIVE TO WORK AND INSTALL SECURE BICYCLE RACKS AND SHOWERS FOR STAFF WHO BIKE TO WORK
- START UP A COMPASSION FUND, WHICH OFFERS EMPLOYEES CONFIDENTIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN EMERGENCIES
- OFFER EMPLOYEES A FLEXIBLE MENU OF PERKS RATHER THAN HAVING ALL EMPLOYEES RECEIVE THE SAME BENEFITS
- MAKE BENEFITS PACKAGES AVAILABLE FROM THE START OF HIRE

CHOICES Adoption

At CHOICES Adoption, employees were consulted directly about what perks they wanted to see as part of a benefits package.

As a result, the company negotiated free parking for employees, a savings of more than \$1,400 a year. The company also implemented an extended medical and dental coverage package, paid for by CHOICES Adoption (not deducted from staff wages). They also covered MSP premiums, saving employees more than \$600 a year, and they created a matching RRSP plan.

“I am treated so well that I don’t plan on leaving,” says office manager Laura Thompson.



Scott Plastics understands that the employment world presents some people with numerous challenges, and the company tries to help them out.

For example, employees who are re-entering the workforce can face many back-to-work costs. New workers can charge work boots to Scott Plastics' account at Mark's Work Wearhouse and have the amount deducted over two pay periods. Plus, all other safety equipment and two Scotty t-shirts are provided free to new employees.

Scott Plastics has hired employees through Labour Unlimited, a temporary employment agency. The manufacturing company also strives to promote staff from within.

In addition, Scott Plastics also hires older workers who may have been out of the workforce for awhile or been laid off. Vice President of Operations Robin Richards says, "an older employee can bring stability and experience, and they know what it is to be in the workplace and have no illusions."

Coast Capital Savings

Coast Capital is known for their competitive wages and professional development of staff. For starters, they hire Customer Service Representatives at \$13.20 an hour and General Insurance Representatives at \$14.63 an hour. Each employee's individual development plan includes one-on-one meetings with branch managers and human resource advisors to determine a career path.

"This is where we try to attract the best and the brightest and then grow and retain them, so they can move up the ladder," says Maureen Young, assistant manager of Community Economic Development. "(They) become the managers, senior managers and executives of our company."

HOW TO...

Develop Employee Knowledge

“The staff are the business. We share as much company information as we can, so they care more.”

Chris Dysart, Brown’s the Florist



HR TIPS

- PROMOTE FROM WITHIN RATHER THAN HIRING FROM OUTSIDE
- MENTOR A NEW EMPLOYEE
- SHARE WITH YOUR EMPLOYEES HOW THE COMPANY IS DOING AND HOW THEIR EFFORTS CONTRIBUTE TO ITS SUCCESS
- HIRE A MATURE WORKER
- MATCH EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS TO TUITION FUNDS

Zambri’s Restaurant

In an industry with traditionally high staff turnover, Zambri’s has an impressive staff retention rate. Co-owner Jo Zambri trains hard working staff and promotes them from within, rewarding them for their loyalty.

For example, four years ago, one of Zambri’s cooks began work as a dishwasher, peeling onions and carrots on the side when there was a lull. This employee gradually increased his responsibilities. He moved to full-time prep work, then to part-time cook with on-the-job training.

Today the employee is a full-time cook. Co-owner Peter Zambri continues to teach him cooking skills, such as minor butchery, that he would acquire only through extensive chef training. Jo says, “You’ve got to understand—we’re Italian. If someone shows us loyalty, we’re loyal to them.”



At SPUD, the food makes the difference.

Staff are paid to make each other lunch with food provided by the company. Staff can also take home leftover produce at the end of each work week, which increases their familiarity with the products SPUD sells.

“By implementing strategies that increase employee satisfaction, hopefully employees stay here longer because they’re happy with their jobs,” says General Manager Karin Bruce.

Staff who work more than 24 hours a week have their medical benefits 80% paid for by SPUD, and staff who make no packing errors receive a \$10 SPUD credit weekly.

The nutritious lunches, free produce and extra perks equal fewer turnovers, Karin says, and that benefits SPUD.

Monk Office Supply

At Monk, the management works to keep communication open.

There is as little division as possible between people who have job concerns and people who can help solve the concerns. With a simple hierarchy, employees feel comfortable talking to management. Monk also takes 20 of its front-line employees on a yearly retreat to discuss their job experience without the presence of management.

“If you motivate, train and pay people better, everybody wins,” President James McKenzie says. “It’s the people who make the difference.”

HOW TO... Develop Employee Knowledge

“I feel a certain responsibility to give as many people as possible a start in the industry.”

Scott Petersen, OA Solutions



HR TIPS

- PROVIDE STAFF WITH ONGOING AND ON-THE-JOB TRAINING
- INVEST IN A STAFF TRAINING FUND THAT ALLOWS ENTRY-LEVEL EMPLOYEES TO APPLY FOR RELATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING
- TURN TWO PART-TIME JOBS INTO A FULL-TIME JOB OR ALLOW TWO EMPLOYEES TO JOB SHARE IF THEY PREFER PART-TIME JOBS
- FOOD INDUSTRY, OFFER YOUR EMPLOYEES A FREE MEAL WHILE AT WORK
- TAKE YOUR FRONT LINE STAFF ON A YEARLY RETREAT TO ENGAGE IN STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

More Resources

The BC Labour Relations Board is an independent, administrative tribunal with the mandate to mediate and adjudicate employment and labour relations matters related to unionized workplaces.

www.lrb.bc.ca

Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada.

www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca

HR Voice is BC Human Resource Management Association's weekly newsletter. www.hrvoice.org



Milestone's Restaurant

Milestone's Restaurant boasts a turnover rate that is about half Victoria's restaurant average, and employees who work more than 20 hours a week receive full medical, dental and extended life insurance after six months.

"Happy staff make for happy guests," General Manager Patricia Allabarton says. "The guests always say staff are so friendly but also professional."

By recruiting and maintaining a star staff, Milestone's benefits as a business.



Pepper's Foods

At Pepper's Foods, full-time employees receive full health and dental benefits, critical illness insurance, and a group RRSP plan. All employees receive a clothing allowance.

The long-term retention of staff that Pepper's has achieved is rare in the grocery industry. "Most full-timers stick around for at least a few years," grocery manager Don Way says. Every manager has been at Pepper's for at least 10 years and has been promoted from within.

"The things I do for my staff bring money back into the store," owner John Davits says.

HOW TO... Increase Workplace Morale

“We really need to model more enlightened employership by offering employees things like flexibility and the recognition that their home life matters.”

Micki Stirling, Sierra Club



HR TIPS

- PROVIDE A FREE BUS PASS TO AN EMPLOYEE
- CANVAS YOUR EMPLOYEES; FIND OUT WHAT AFFECTS THEIR WORK/LIFE BALANCE
- PROVIDE A CLOTHING ALLOWANCE TO EMPLOYEES
- ALLOW EMPLOYEES TO TAKE HOME UNSALEABLE GOODS THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE THROWN OUT
- MAKE SHORT-TERM SMALL CASH ADVANCES TO A NEWLY HIRED WORKER

More Resources

The BC Human Resources Management Association is a registered non-profit dedicated to advancing professional people practices.

www.bchrma.org

Canadian HR Reporter online and print magazine is Canada's guide to human resources, complete with articles, columns, case studies and tips. www.hrreporter.com

Royal Roads University's Human Resources Management Graduate Certificate Program. www.royalroads.ca



The Victoria Airport Authority follows through on staff suggestions about work/life balance, and in turn benefits with productive employees and almost non-existent turnover.

The airport's firefighters suggested a big scheduling change in January of 2004. After reviewing labour codes, the Victoria Airport Authority agreed to test the idea for a year. The new schedule would offer firefighters more days off while reducing airport overtime costs. The change has been a huge success.

"We never work two days in a row," fire captain Scott Snow says. "I really enjoy the time off." Scott gets to spend more time with his one-year-old son. His wife also works, but with Scott's flexible schedule, the family only pays for six days of daycare a month.

"We take what they (employees) say and try and help out," says Lorraine Wilson, human resources administrator. "Work shouldn't stress you out. It should enhance your life."

Vancity

At Vancity, a range of flexible work arrangements ensure staff are able to balance their work with their life. Some of those include job sharing, compressed four-day work week, nine-day fortnight (every other Friday off), reduced 28 to 35 hour work week and flex time (with core hours covered).

"Employers often hesitate to institute flexible work hours," says Teresa Shepherd, HR Business Consultant. "Vancity has found that offering a variety of choices as a work schedule...has proved very beneficial to the organization and the individual."

HOW TO...

Increase Workplace Morale

“My approach to business is as a team. If we can succeed as a company, we should all share in the reward.”

Paul Holmes, TransitionalMedia



HR TIPS

- ALLOW EMPLOYEES TO DO SOME WORK AT HOME OR TELECOMMUTE
- ORGANIZE A WORK CLOTHING SWAP AMONG STAFF
- HAVE YOUR EMPLOYEES FILL OUT AN ANONYMOUS WORKPLACE SATISFACTION SURVEY
- COVER COSTS OF ELDER CARE PLANNING FOR EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBLE FOR AN ELDERLY RELATIVE
- AWARD CONTRACTS TO COMPANIES THAT PAY THEIR EMPLOYEES A LIVING WAGE

Sierra Club

Paying non-profit employees a high wage is not always possible, so small, low-cost actions can make a big difference. Sierra Club employees can work flexible hours or even work from home.

Steve Young, GIS technician and systems administrator, lives in Goldstream and telecommutes. “Telecommuting saves me an hour a day, it’s better for the environment, and I can spend more time with my family,” Steve says. By working from home one day a week, he saves about \$10 on gas and parking, a savings of about \$500 a year.

Telecommuting allows staff to work around their lives. “Flexibility makes the job easier, and it may allow people to stick with the job longer,” Steve says.



At Frontrunners, staff benefit from an array of cost saving perks. For example, staff and their families may purchase goods from the store at cost plus 10 percent. Frontrunners' suppliers are encouraged to provide staff with free shoes and clothing. Schedules are flexible to accommodate family life, athletic training and events. Staff receive wages or a gift certificate to the store in return for volunteering up to three hours per month in the community.

The result of Frontrunners' generous policy is a loyal staff. Employee Patrick Maguire is a retired school teacher and a trained master electrician, but he chooses to stay at Frontrunners. "I've been here for eight years," he says. "It was only supposed to be for a few."

Frontrunners' approach to staff pays off. The stores' annual sales have increased 95% since 2000. "We believe in strengthening the individual. The company comes second," owner Rob Reid says. "It all comes back to you if you do the right thing."

Shady Creek Ice Cream

Owner Christie Eng's commitment to making a product with quality ingredients is matched by her commitment to quality relationships with her employees. Christie's business is located on the Saanich Peninsula, and she understands that public transportation to the area is limited. Christie encourages her employees to match work to the bus times, rather than insisting her employees meet a rigid schedule.

Employees can also work longer hours one day and shorter hours another, so they can deposit their paycheque before the bank closes, or accommodate other personal tasks.

"It's about having control over their lives," Christie says. "We give them as much control as we can. They take pride in meeting the needs of the job. And it makes a huge difference in how they feel."

HOW TO... Increase Workplace Morale

“Workplace dynamics make coming to work more enjoyable, and staff can be comfortable. Without staff, we wouldn’t be able to succeed.”

Andrea Minter, Russell Books



HR TIPS

- PROVIDE INTEREST FREE LOANS TO STAFF TO PURCHASE WORK GEAR, EQUIPMENT AND PERSONAL COMPUTERS
- PASS ALONG GIFTS FROM YOUR SUPPLIERS TO YOUR EMPLOYEES
- ENCOURAGE STAFF TO ORGANIZE A CAR POOL
- HIRE A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY TO ALLOW THEM TO TOP UP THEIR BENEFITS
- CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR STAFF TO ADDRESS THEIR CONCERNS WITH MANAGEMENT

North Saanich

As a taxpayer-funded workplace, North Saanich municipal hall’s human resources are creative and frugal.

Staff initiated a modified work week last year, which means staff rotate taking every third Friday off. The schedule adds a half hour onto each employee’s day.

The district benefits too, says Sandy Bowden, director of corporate services. “The modified work week offers the public an extra half hour of service and doesn’t cost anything.”

North Saanich is proof that good human resources practices can be inexpensive and benefit taxpayers by reducing costly turnover.

Quality of Life CHALLENGE Leadership Partners:



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Bringing people together
 to create solutions in the areas of homes,
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 in BC's Capital Region.

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TAKE UP THE
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