



MANITOBA'S TOP EMPLOYERS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2018

MANITOBA'S TOP EMPLOYERS FOR 2019

APTN
ACCESS CREDIT UNION LTD.
ARCTIC CO-OPERATIVES LTD.
ARTIS REIT
ASSINIBOINE CREDIT UNION LTD.
BIRCHWOOD AUTOMOTIVE GROUP
BOEING CANADA OPERATIONS LTD.
CANAD INNS
CARGILL LTD.
CWB NATIONAL LEASING INC.

DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA
EMERGENT BIOSOLUTIONS INC.
GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA
GRANNY'S POULTRY COOPERATIVE LTD.
GREAT-WEST LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY
LAWTON PARTNERS FINANCIAL
PLANNING SERVICES LTD.
MANITOBA BLUE CROSS
MANITOBA HYDRO
MANITOBA LIQUOR & LOTTERIES
MANITOBA PUBLIC INSURANCE

PALLISER FURNITURE UPHOLSTERY LTD.
RED RIVER COLLEGE
ST.AMANT INC.
ST. JOHN'S-RAVENS COURT SCHOOL
STANDARD AERO
TRUE NORTH SPORTS + ENTERTAINMENT
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
WESTMAN COMMUNICATIONS GROUP
WINNIPEG AIRPORTS AUTHORITY INC.
WORKERS COMPENSATION BOARD
OF MANITOBA

TOP EMPLOYERS COMPETITION ABOUT MORE THAN JUST NUMBERS

BY GEOFF KIRBYSON

Your dream employer might be Google or Facebook, but the researchers behind the Manitoba's Top Employers project hope job-seekers will wake up to what really makes a company a great place to work.

As part of the Toronto-based Canada's Top 100 Employers competition, the research team aims to increase the literacy of the national workforce, particularly millennials who tend to get caught up in the hype surrounding high-profile companies. Likes, views and retweets are fine in the moment, but they're worth nothing when it comes to your future, they say.

"We still write about great employers with defined benefit pension plans," says Tony Meehan, Publisher at Mediacorp Canada Inc., which manages the Canada's Top 100 Employers project. "People don't realize that can be the difference between a happy retirement or no retirement at all. As you get older, vacation time makes a big difference (in where you want to work). We still see employers offering two weeks to start and three weeks after five years. We like to publish what the very best are doing," he says.

Mediacorp has been ranking Canadian employers of all kinds for 19 years and Meehan's team of editors doesn't get tired of scouring the country looking for employers with interesting stories of doing things differently in their industry or region.

"Each year, employers bare their souls to us. We have 400 data points that each of them shares with us, including benefits like maternity leave, top vacation allowance, training and a host of other factors," he says.

Here's how the competition works: each employer is given an internal grade before being sorted for the national list by industry and region. For individual provinces such as Manitoba, the

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A CHANCE TO GIVE BACK A LURE FOR MANY YOUNGER EMPLOYEES

TODD LEWYS

Millennials are oft-criticized for their obsession with technology and seemingly less-than-stellar work ethic.

While those character traits baffle older generations, Millennials – the generation that was born between 1980 and 2000, to be precise – do possess a character trait that garners universal admiration: their desire to give back.

These days, as company workforces need to be replenished due to retirement and the transient nature of today's job market, savvy employers are using a novel strategy to recruit Millennials: community-oriented programs that allow twenty and thirtysomethings to give back to the community they work in.

"Well-developed community programs have always been the hallmark of the best employers," says Richard Yerema, Managing Editor for Mediacorp's Canada's Top 100 Employers. "Today more than ever, those programs have to be genuine if employers want to attract Millennials to their company."

The reason is simple: Millennials do want to make the world a better place. And they will use technology – i.e., their well-used smartphones – to find out if an employer's community program is for real.

"If they're interested in working for a certain company, Millennials will investigate their website and social media to see what the program is all about," Yerema says. "They can find out pretty quickly if an employer is walking their talk or not."

Craig Evans, CEO for Granny's Poultry, says that a recent staff survey revealed that a strong community program is a big part of what attracts Millennials to work for the company and encourages people to remain there. This came as good news to Granny's management team, he adds.

"We were pleasantly surprised by the survey results and pleased to know that employees recognize the value of our community program at Granny's and the need to give back," Evans says.

John Quail, Chief Marketing Officer for the Westman Communications Group, says his company is also using a strong community program to recruit Millennials.

"They want to be socially responsible, and we appreciate that," he says. "We have a very strong community program that encourages our employees to get involved as much as they can, so I think we're well-positioned in their eyes right from the get-go."

That positioning gets even stronger due to a small but significant perk that comes with getting involved in the community.

"We have no problem giving our staff members – especially our marketing team, which is quite young – time off to take part in community or charitable events," Quail says. "Millennials really appreciate that. They just love being involved and being able to give back."

Yerema says employers like Granny's and Westman – ones who walk their talk with their community programs – are the ones who will continue to attract Millennials to their workforce.

"Strong community programs are just a simple, good way to engage people. It's a creative way to put employees' energy to work."

Not only is it creative, but it's tangible, he adds.

"Creating touchstones in the community is important in an increasingly urban world. Getting involved in the community is tangible and real. People can lose touch with the modern world all too easily. A strong community program helps employees stay in touch."

Consequently, the involvement level is high – something that not only Millennials, but all employees appreciate.

"The payback in terms of engagement is high," Yerema says. "People can utilize their skills on company time. You feel good about yourself and your employer. In the end, it creates a win-win scenario. Employees – particularly Millennials – can engage at the human level, and employers can use strong community programs as an effective recruitment tool."

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS

top companies are listed alphabetically. One thing that the Top Employers can't be accused of is failing to do its research. Each year, it writes nearly one million words in publishing its selections and the rationale for selecting each of the winning employers.

"You might not agree with each of the winners we've chosen but it's there in black and white for readers to understand why the winners were selected," Meehan says.

Spelling it out in such detail encourages transparency in the selection of the winners.

"People know it's a fair competition. It also encourages the employers to raise the bar themselves. They pick up the paper, read about what a competitor that made the list is doing – then decide they should match their maternity leave program or offer better working conditions," he says.

"We're looking for the kinds of things a job seeker would be interested in. We write from their point of view, from what a new employee would be interested in."

In fact, Meehan says the editorial team usually sees applications from competitors within a year or two – as a result, the overall situation for workers improves in that industry.

"In the Top 100, we have 100 per cent of them now doing maternity leave top-up. Some will pay up to 80 per cent of your salary for 26 weeks so you won't be left with just the EI subsidy for that period. This makes a big deal for people. How much is your employer going to stand by and help? When you publish it, other employers take notice," he says.

The national program and the Manitoba numbers are all part of the same project. When a Manitoba-based organization applies for the national list, they're automatically in the running for the Manitoba competition.

"We go through the information they provide and when something really stands out from the rest of their industry, something we haven't seen before, we'll go back to the employers and ask for more evidence or clarification," he says.

The Aboriginal People's Television Network, or APTN, has cut the Top Employers muster for 11 consecutive years. Debbie Isaak, its director of human resources, says being recognized brings more than just added credibility to the Winnipeg-based network.

"It boosts our employees' morale, makes them very proud and it brings an awareness to them about how we compare to other work cultures. It also brings awareness to our viewers and the rest of the public, all of which has a positive impact on the network," she says.

One of the differentiators that sets APTN apart is it's an Indigenous employer that offers traditional elder services as part of its employee and family assistance program. It also provides traditional Indigenous gifts for long-service awards. For example, somebody celebrating their 10-year anniversary at the station receives a customized star blanket featuring colours that are distinct to them.

APTN has a total of 145 employees, 70 per cent of whom are in Winnipeg. Two-thirds of its staff are Indigenous, but Isaak is also proud of its gender parity – 53 per cent of its workers are female.

"We talk the talk and walk the walk," she says.

APTN WORK ENVIRONMENT PROMOTES THE VALUE OF PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

BY WENDY KING

Every workplace has its own distinct culture.

At APTN, Director of Human Resources Debbie Isaak sees APTN as having not just a unique culture, but a unique personality that expresses itself in the dignity and encouragement it affords its employees. It's one of the reasons that APTN has been cited as one of Manitoba's Top Employers for 11 years running.

Isaak started as a Payroll Administrator in 2002, and with the support of a manager who saw her potential and drive, she studied and worked her way up through the ranks at APTN where she is proud to continue to work in, and influence, that workplace culture.

"I believe our good work environment supports not only the mission and the objectives of APTN, but it also cultivates people and relationships through our shared beliefs and values," Isaak says.

"Aspects of our 'unique personality' include ensuring that our employees feel at home when they are at work because we are sometimes at work more hours than we are at home."

APTN's physical surroundings reflect the traditional cultures of Indigenous peoples. Isaak points to their maple-wrapped studio, accented with artifacts which are representative of the four directions and the traditional colours of blue, red, and yellow.

"We have united news, investigative and technical teams together in one open space to foster cooperative relationships," she says. "And when we come together, our boardroom features a custom-made round worktable that echoes our traditional medicine wheel."

Indigenous culture is addressed in APTN's training programs, as part of a dedicated budget for learning and development for all staff.

"We offer cultural awareness programs in understanding Indigenous and treaty rights, workplace harassment awareness, WHMIS training, and we also require management training and development for anyone promoted to management," Isaak says.

APTN has a formalized mentorship program which provides employees with some developmental and growth opportunities.

"One thing I learned when I came into human resources here is that while APTN does a lot of training and development for our people if

APTN's social committee is responsible for creating fun and dynamic social events that encourage camaraderie beyond the workplace.

PHOTO BY APTN

they decide to leave us, we're OK with it," Isaak says. "We see it as a good thing and that we are helping them to move forward in their careers."

Gender parity is also a priority at APTN.

"Across the country, we have 53 per cent female and 47 per cent male employees; and 59 per cent female managers and 41 per cent male," Isaak says.

"And I'm proud to say that 67 per cent of our employees across the country are Indigenous."

Along with parity comes benefits for mothers and fathers.

"We provide maternity and parental top-up for new mothers, new fathers and adoptive parents," she says.

Staff who have contributed significant years of service are also recognized and celebrated with a mind to tradition.

"Our service awards are unique," Isaak says. "With 10 years, a customized star blanket is awarded using the colours that are specific to the person's background, and our 15-year award is birchbark biting

with traditional beadwork representing each distinct Indigenous culture."

Scholarships lead to a bright future for young people.

"We offer a formal work experience program, and we provide three \$2,000 scholarships every year for one Inuit student, one Métis student, and one First Nations student which can be applied to meet any need related to their education including rent, food or school books," she says.

APTN recognizes the importance of providing a socially responsive workplace.

"We have a social committee which plans short-term events like barbecues or holiday parties for the kids, and an employee engagement committee which handles long-term initiatives like our RAP program," Isaak says.

RAP stands for "recognize, appreciate and praise," a program which generates an upbeat atmosphere with immediate positive feedback from managers to staff, and amongst and across all team members.

"It might be an acknowledgement with

a little gift that says: thank you for helping me out on a project," Isaak adds. "It doesn't cost much but is it very effective."

APTN also recognizes that people bring different gifts and talents to the worktable.

"We have a Share Your Talents program, where we can invite someone who is adept at beading or crocheting or painting, for example, to share their knowledge at a lunchtime class," Isaak says.

Conversation and communication are encouraged with two digital boards in the lobby keeping everyone up to date on community events, services and awards, and more.

"I've been with APTN for 17 years, and I can attest to how great a place this is," Isaak says.

"APTN supported me in my venture to pursue human resources and to earn and continue to maintain my Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR) designation. It's a demonstration of how cultivating our employee is about ensuring a culture of ongoing learning."

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ACCESS CREDIT UNION FOCUSED ON INVESTING IN PEOPLE

BY WENDY KING

The financial services industry is in constant flux. Frequent advances in delivery technology and product development paired with increased demands by consumers for convenience drive the kind of change best met with a nimble and committed workforce.

Access Credit Union prides itself on being one of Manitoba's Top Employers by staying ahead of the technological and informational curves and creating a strong workplace culture that encourages growth and retention among its 260 employees who meet those demands with confidence.

"We keep our focus on our people, our investment in those people, and working towards stronger engagement from all of our staff," says President and CEO Larry Davey. "We are looking to create and build on a great employee experience."

Access Credit Union invests for success in their people.

"We cover all of their post-secondary education and provide significant ongoing training, so we're now up to a dozen people who have completed or are completing their MBAs," Davey says.

"And our board wants us to invest about twice as much as what any other credit union would."

Ongoing "A-Plus" training develops interactions among staff and with members, improving the organizational culture.

"We're providing more effective tools and management programs to

our staff in customer relationship that make it easy for them to know how the members can be best assisted."

Davey says very competitive salaries and benefits are also provided.

"We see that as a strong investment in them, so we offer things like a clothing allowance in addition to ongoing training," he says.

Communication channels are kept open with staff surveys. They show that 87 per cent of staff would recommend Access Credit Union as a great place to work.

"We seek that kind of engagement because we understand that our staff are our best ambassadors out in the community," he says.

Additionally, an outside company is contracted every two years to do candid, anonymous surveys of the employees.

"Our human resources staff research best practices in this and other industries for reviewing satisfaction among employees, and how they feel toward their employer, the industry and their jobs," Davey says.

Providing courses in "change management" for all management personnel develops confidence with the shifts that are happening and gives them the skills to help staff confidently



manage growth and development as well.

"I know that in the first two thirds of my career there was very, very little change, and that would have been the experience for many of the staff that work here, but that has been flipped on its head," he says.

Davey says the introduction of their new Innovation Center, located between Winkler and Morden, is demonstrating how a branch might develop going forward. The centre tests all new technology and processes before rolling them out to the branches.

"We chose three people who think outside the box and gave them innovation training that would help them look at every process the credit union has from the members' point of view rather than from the credit union's point of view to create a much more engaged membership,"

Davey says.

A key element in fostering staff engagement is that the credit union shares their values and beliefs in their commitment to community.

"We look to hire people that are committed to their community," Davey says.

One community initiative that was brought forward by a staff member was to invite everyone to pay to wear jeans on a weekly basis, using the money raised to benefit local charities. The credit union matches the total.

"The 2018 total raised will be \$50,000," Davey says. "But for 2019, they are raising it to \$3 a week which means we will be in the \$70,000 to \$75,000 mark. It shows us that our staff were on the same wavelength as the credit union is in supporting the sustainability of the community."

Davey says that people who are engaged are not looking for other

work and by seeking out people who are geared for change, looking for support and continuous education, retention rates are high.

Davey sees Access continuing to grow, an indicator that members are happy with the services provided by staff.

"When we talk about our people, we know we couldn't be a top employer without all of the strong people we have working for us," Davey says. "We celebrate them and we really appreciate that our people are always working to improve on and provide the best expertise and advice they can to all of our members."

Access Credit Union employees are collaborating at their Innovation Centre to formulate new technology solutions.

PHOTO BY DARCY FINLEY



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The Arctic Co-ops Polar Dragons entered their first Manitoba Dragon Boat Festival earlier this year and raised \$8,604 for the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation and the Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba.

ARCTIC CO-OPS PROUD TO SERVE CANADA'S NORTH

BY DIANE POULIN

For the third consecutive year, Arctic Co-operatives Limited has earned a spot among Manitoba's Top Employer by creating a workplace culture that values diversity, inclusion, innovation, and a healthy dose of fun.

Arctic Co-ops is also a prime showcase of Indigenous and Inuit self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship. Comprised of 32 community-owned businesses employing 1,000 people across Canada's North, team members at Arctic Co-ops have been offering critically important services to remote communities since 1972. In the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, people rely on Arctic Co-ops services

for everything from cable television, to retail stores, hotels and even fuel delivery. The support office, based in Winnipeg's Inkster Industrial Park with 100 employees, acts as a hub for Co-ops in the Arctic to pool their purchasing power and improve efficiencies in their businesses.

"We centralize administrative work so Co-ops can spend more of their time and effort serving their

local members," says CEO Rod Wilson. "Our primary purpose is to work together with Co-ops to build capacity and improve social and economic wellbeing for people and communities across the north."

It is this sense of shared mission that inspires employees.

"Our staff feel connected to a bigger purpose, and so it is an empowering environment," says

Estelle Moore, Vice-President of Human Resources. "We also have a strong commitment to in-house training and development. We invest in our people and support their advancement."

Arctic Co-ops also utilizes best practices in offering employees solid health, dental, vacation and pension benefits.

Co-ops differ from the private sector in that each member has an equal vote. An elected board reports back annually to all members at a general assembly, so staff feel a genuine connection to their leadership. There is a strong focus on relationship-building, which mirrors the traditional sharing cultures of the Inuit and Indigenous peoples.

Nurturing a sense of teamwork extends past work hours with fun activities initiated by Arctic Co-op employees. This summer staff organized a softball team and a dragon boat team that raised money for cancer research. They also have a craft club, yoga classes and access to a ping-pong table.

"That sense of personal staff engagement is something we are proud of and we are finding new ways to network with each other," says Lacey Chyz, Manager of Marketing and Communications.

Over the past year, Chyz explains, a social media push has seen Arctic Co-op create an active Facebook community, where news and events can be shared. The social media platform recently announced its intentions to start translating parts of Facebook into Inuktitut, a combination of Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut dialects.

"Many people in the North

rely on Facebook for essential communications. It is also an important way for us to get feedback from Co-op members, and to recruit new people, from truck drivers to cashiers," she says.

This past year, Arctic Co-ops ran a popular online favourite calendar photo contest and more than 400 submission came in from members, featuring spectacularly beautiful places from across the territories. Thirteen were selected for the company calendar.

In addition to supporting essential services across the North, Arctic Co-ops has also been instrumental in sharing the beauty and mystery of the region through art for more than 50 years. Inuit and First Nations art is popular throughout the world and includes prints, carvings, beadwork, wall hangings, cards and jewelry. The co-ops model ensures the artists involved receive a fair price for their work.

Northern Images, the retail art marketing arm of Arctic Co-ops, supports and promotes northern artists and their products by marketing Inuit and First Nations art and crafts in their Yellowknife store, Iqaluit airport gift shop and through the Northern Images website. The benefits of the sales of art are returned to the member owners and to the communities in Canada's north.

Find out more about Arctic Co-operatives at arcticco-op.com/index.htm and on Facebook at: [facebook.com/ArcticCoopsLtd/](https://www.facebook.com/ArcticCoopsLtd/)

Information about Northern Images is available at northernimages.ca and [facebook.com/NorthernImagesArt](https://www.facebook.com/NorthernImagesArt).



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ACU: A PASSION FROM WITHIN

If one way to determine if a company is a truly outstanding employer is to check with their employees, then Assiniboine Credit Union must be doing a lot of things right. Employee feedback at the Manitoba credit union is, more-often-than-not, of the glowing kind.

"The positive response we get from our employees is a real source of pride for us," says Kim Champion Taylor, Vice-President of People Solutions. "I truly am impressed with the depth of connection employees have with our vision and values, and how that translates into successful careers with ACU."

One such story is that of Vera Couto, who came to Winnipeg from her native Portugal. Her first job was to clean offices, including the ACU head office on Main Street.

"As I cleaned the ATM area of the Main Branch each morning, I would see the ACU team smiling and laughing with each other and with members. I knew that I could do more than clean floors and I was determined to be on that team," Couto says.

"Eighteen months later I applied for a position, and now I've been promoted to a Member Services Coordinator position at a new branch. In Portugal I worked for the same employer for nine years and never felt as welcome or part of a team as I do at ACU. They took a chance on me and believed in me, and I want to help others now in return more than ever."

Champion Taylor says stories like these make ACU a special place.

"Vera's story isn't unique in ACU but it certainly is special. Career opportunities like these aren't created

without talented and values-aligned leaders and colleagues who have this exceptional ability to look beyond traditional qualifications, and find the values and characteristics of an individual that will support their personal and professional success at ACU."

Sharmila Vijayann, a Learning Solutions Business Partner at ACU, saw the difference right from the start.

"The way my interview flowed and how my skills demo was conducted, I got a strong sense of purpose, commitment, inclusion and integrity from the whole panel," says Vijayann, who has been with ACU since 2016.

"I enjoy participating in diverse cross functional projects, each of which brings deep insights, interesting challenges and meaningful experiences, adding value to my time here. And I deeply appreciate the ACU vision, mission and values, our business ethics, commitment to the triple bottom line — people, planet and prosperity — and the importance ACU places in its employees," she adds.

Mani Sheppard-Luangkhot, a Financial Access Programs Manager, understands the importance of financial literacy. Her family arrived from Laos in 1985 and learning about banking and finances in Canada was challenging. After her post-secondary

education, she was able to pursue her dream of helping others.

"My desire was to work with an organization that fosters diversity and inclusion, one that is just as committed as I am about giving back to community," she says. "I was able to pursue my passion to work with financial literacy and to play a part in financial inclusion for the underserved. As someone once said, 'it's about building community, not selling community'."

A big part of fostering the strong belief in what ACU does is the Being Assiniboine program. Every employee

experiences this in-depth, three-day workshop that guides everyone through an exploration of how a financial institution can have real impact on a community, and how each employee owns a piece of that impact while working at ACU.

"These three days provide everyone with an opportunity to reconnect with the ACU vision and mission. The workshop provides everyone the chance to examine how they themselves play an important role in creating that ideal community every day at work," says Champion Taylor.

The ACU mission is to provide

financial services for the betterment of members, employees and communities. Adds Champion Taylor, "Providing employees with the opportunity to bring their whole selves to work and engage in meaningful work, is one way we remain true to our mission, while helping them build a rewarding career."

(Left to right) ACU staff members Mani Sheppard-Luangkhot, Abdi Hussein, Helen Labustro and Echo Lou at the Newcomer Welcome Fair, this past June.

PHOTO BY JASON HALSTEAD



What does a rewarding career mean to you?

To our employees, it's all about having engaging and meaningful work. It means being able to use their talents fully, while being recognized for the work they do. They're proud of their role in making ACU what it is; an important part of the community providing vital services to our members, all guided by the principles of 'values-based banking'.

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GRATITUDE IS KEY AT BIRCHWOOD AUTOMOTIVE GROUP

BY JENNIFER MCFEE

Gratitude has remained a driving force at Birchwood Automotive Group for 55 years and counting.

R.M. Chipman launched the company in 1963 with one dealership. Since then, the booming business has expanded to employ approximately 1,300 employees at 22 dealerships. The founder's son, Steve Chipman, currently runs the company.

"Even though we've grown over the years, our culture has sustained itself," says MaryAnn Kempe, Chief Human Resources Officer.

"Our corporate culture begins with gratitude and we work hard at it. We integrate it in all our recognition programs and new employee orientation."

Throughout the business, three questions guide discussions to develop an attitude of gratitude.

"What are you grateful for? What is your dream? What is one thing that you could do that would improve the life of a co-worker, a team member, your community, your family or yourself?" Kempe says.

"We ask our employees these powerful questions, which are really entwined in all of our culture."

From there, it's easy to create a roadmap that steers employees towards their leadership potential.

"Personal leadership is about always looking at yourself and being self-aware. Our goal is that people take accountability," Kempe says.

"They are serving our customers and they want to give you extraordinary service."

When it comes to the company's values, it stands strong on four basic tenets: trust, respect, continuous improvement and generosity.

"We train all our employees on awareness starting with self, which comes from building

trust and respect with customers, team members and business partners," Kempe says.

"We're always striving to improve. We know that you can't stand still; you have to move forward. The car business is changing, and we have to change with it."

As for generosity, it's clear to see the company's commitment through initiatives such as its well-supported United Way campaign.

"Giving back to our community is huge at Birchwood. We just had a record year for gifts and participation in our United Way campaign," Kempe says.

"We encourage employees to get involved throughout our entire organization, and this year 93 per cent of our employees participated. To me, that says a lot about our employee engagement."

Birchwood Automotive Group also takes the time to ensure that the employees feel appreciated.

For Sarah Giesbrecht, manager of human resources, it's important for the employees to know that they can advance within the company.

"They have the opportunity to move internally within the organization," Giesbrecht says.

"We have a mandate where 80 per cent of our management positions are to be filled internally within the organization as well. We want to give our team members that opportunity to grow within the group."

The employees also feel valued through benefits such as access to a nearby fitness facility and the ability to contribute to a group RRSP savings plan.

"Right now, the average age of our employees is 34 years old, so we're a really young company," Giesbrecht says. "We try to encourage people to save for the future."

In addition, Birchwood focuses on education by offering ongoing training for employees and scholarships for their children.



"We really believe in continuous improvement," Kempe says, "and that starts with improving yourself."

The company also takes pride in its strong communications through Apex and Compass, internal programs similar to LinkedIn that allows employees to learn more about anyone else in the company.

As well, employees enjoy the chance to get to know each other better at company events such as the annual Christmas party and weekly Truck on Tuesdays lunches throughout the summer months.

It's initiatives such as these that have propelled Birchwood Automotive Group to the Manitoba Top Employers list for the second straight year.

"We appreciate and are grateful for the recognition of being a best employer – it helps us to attract and retain great people," Kempe says.

Birchwood Automotive Group team members are passionate about the United Way and giving back to the community.

PHOTOS BY SPOT ON CREATIVE

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The Birchwood Automotive Group is proud to be recognized as one of Manitoba's Top 30 Employers, as well as one of Canada's Best Employers.

Our team members are individuals of character, competence, and commitment. They are trustworthy, they work together and they are committed to enhancing our work environment and the experience of our customers. We are extremely proud of each and every one of them. We offer team members a respectful and challenging work environment, an industry leading benefits package and opportunities for advancement.



Canad Inns family members getting ready to have fun and show Canad pride in the annual Santa Claus Parade.

CANAD INNS ALL ABOUT IDENTIFYING, MENTORING TALENT

BY JARED STORY

As a made-in-Manitoba company, Canad Inns is committed to its communities, its employees and the people of the prairie province.

The family hospitality business was founded in 1978. Since its small-town start, Canad Inns has grown into Manitoba's largest hospitality provider, with 15 facilities in Winnipeg, Brandon, Portage la Prairie and Grand Forks, N.D.

The company employs more than 3,500 people and serves over nine million customers a year in its Canad Inns Destinations Centres, as well as such establishments as Radisson Winnipeg, Tavern United Bell MTS Place, two Garbonzo's Sports Pub locations and The Metropolitan Entertainment Centre.

"Canad Inns was started as a very small, privately-owned company by my dad (Leo)," says Canad Inns president Lea Ledohowski. "We've grown substantially over the last several decades, but have made a conscious choice to stay regional, to stay Manitoban, and to stay true to the communities that we operate in."

"We have a very strong philosophy that it's a reciprocal system. We are the beneficiaries of the customers from our community and we feel

very strongly that it's our responsibility as a local organization to give back to the community."

In 2011, Canad Inns established the Canad Inns Foundation which supports hundreds of local and national charities. Canad Inns sponsors WE Day Manitoba, presents Canad Inns Winter Wonderland, an annual light display at Red River Exhibition Park, and for 17 years the company hosted Family Fun Day on July 1 at Assiniboine Park.

Canad Inns also matches employee donations to the United Way.

"We encourage our employees to be ambassadors to the community," Ledohowski says. "Each individual Canad Inns Destination Centre or restaurant has its own relationships with its own community and supports its own community in a variety of different ways, both in terms of gifts in kind, as well as pure financial contributions."

Ledohowski believes that because Canad Inns is privately-owned, it allows the company to be

"very nimble" in how it develops its personnel.

"It's a private company that is large enough to allow for someone to have a soup to nuts career development experience," says Ledohowski, who started at Canad Inns as a youth serving and bussing tables.

"Many of our senior executives started with us in entry-level positions and have been with us for decades, working their way through the ranks. One of the things that's really important to me as a leader in the organization is to be able to identify talent in the early stages, to mentor and foster that talent, and grow people into careers that are interesting for them."

Ledohowski says her business philosophy isn't about filling positions but finding the right people.

"We don't have cookie-cutter positions and try to put people into those roles. We find great people and try to develop roles that they can be really successful at," she says.

Canad Inns employees are also encouraged to find the right people, as the company operates an employee referral program. Recruiting the right person can earn a Canad Inns employee \$250 to \$1,500 depending on the position.

Other perks at Canad Inns include subsidized meals, discounted hotel stays, and regular work parties.

Ledohowski says she and the staff at Canad Inns are thrilled to be recognized as one of Manitoba's Top Employers.

"One of our taglines we use in our marketing materials is 'Manitoba owned, Manitoba grown, Manitoba proud' and I think that's crucial to our organization," Ledohowski says.

"That's been a conscious choice. There's been lots of discussions at the executive level and there was that critical moment where we said 'We can franchise. We can go Canada-wide. We can be bigger.' But the realization was in doing so you lose control, you lose ownership of what you're doing."

"We knew we could do what we do better by staying true to who we are and staying local."

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EMPLOYEES' OPINIONS MATTER AT CWB NATIONAL LEASING

BY PAT REDIGER

At CWB National Leasing Inc. (National Leasing), employees are encouraged to bring their perspectives to the table.

National Leasing is an equipment financing company based out of Winnipeg that helps more than 70,000 Canadian businesses secure equipment they need to help their business grow. Grant Shaw, Senior Vice-President of Strategy and Culture at National Leasing, says you get a sense of the company's open culture the minute you walk through the door.

"It can be something as simple as walking down the hallway and seeing people saying hello to each other," Shaw says.

"We're very inclusive in the sense that everyone's opinion matters; everyone has an opportunity to contribute to the organization. Beyond that, we focus on finding out what people's expectations are when they come to work here and treating them that way."

Shaw noted that National Leasing looks to get the conversation rolling through transparent

communication from the top down.

"There's no information that's unknown in this organization," he says. "After our leadership meetings, we do a summary and send it out to everyone in the organization. I edit those summaries and can say that everything we talk about is communicated."

Shaw adds that the leadership team also has no offices. New hires often indicate they've never worked for such an organization where the leadership team is so accessible.

The company gets employees directly involved through its bi-monthly "Pardon the Interruption" meetings, where the company brings in lunch and introduces new team members, celebrates anniversaries and provides insights into the business by discussing financial information and what the challenges and opportunities are. Although National Leasing

has nearly 80 sales staff spread across Canada (it has over 300 at its head office), the company takes extra effort to get them involved.

"We ensure that out-of-town employees have an opportunity to participate in meetings via a webcam," Shaw says. "Since we provide everyone with lunch for that meeting, remote workers get to expense their lunch that day."

National Leasing is very much focused on the wellness of its employees. The company has a well-equipped onsite gym and fitness studio with daily instructor-led classes and a massage therapist who visits every second week. Healthy lunches from Green Carrot and Pita Pit are also available at a subsidized cost multiple times a week. When employees need to unwind, they can take advantage of relaxation rooms on site for reading, sleeping or meditating (the company also offers free weekly meditation classes).

A sense of wellness can also extend out to the community. National Leasing provides paid time for its employees to participate in charitable activities and volunteering. The company also brings in speakers from charitable organizations to highlight ongoing initiatives they can support.

Perhaps one of the great examples that highlights the company's commitment to its employees' wellness is the health coach it recently hired.

"We have a certified trainer who provides professional-level health coaching. It's all web

and email based, which allows us to extend that benefit to people outside the building," Shaw says. "You've got people here eight hours a day, five days a week, and as an employer we've worked hard to determine where our responsibility lies to make sure those people have a good foundation for wellness."

National Leasing also offers other attractive benefits to its employees. The company used to have a deferred profit-sharing plan that changed to a share purchase plan. Employees can contribute up to 10 per cent of their salary and enjoy a five per cent contribution from the company. Every employee gets an automatic two per cent contribution from the company.

"There's definitely an ownership feeling within the organization," Shaw says. "Employees know they have a direct impact on our collective success."

Shaw has worked at National Leasing for 20 years and says it has been an experience like no other.

"I've never worked for a place like this before and I can honestly say that's been the case since day one," he says. "The previous leadership that was here instilled such an inviting, open culture that we still have today. I can truly say it's the best place to work."

CWB National Leasing employees cheered on the Winnipeg Jets during the 2018 Stanley Cup Playoffs.

PHOTO BY BRADLEY GERBRANDT



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CWB
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Emergent BioSolutions Winnipeg employees recently celebrated the company's 20th anniversary.

PHOTO BY SIVART PRODUCTIONS

EMERGENT BIOSOLUTIONS CREATING CULTURE CENTRED ON EMPLOYEES

BY PAT REDIGER

As Emergent BioSolutions works hard to protect and enhance life, it's also taking the time to look internally and focus on the quality of life of its employees. With 1,600 employees across the globe it is a priority.

Emergent provides specialty products for civilian and military populations that address accidental, intentional and naturally occurring public health threats. Mark Lobe, Vice-President and General Manager of Emergent's Winnipeg office, the most populous among the company's 19 locations, says the process starts by getting employees engaged in the corporate culture.

"Our corporate culture promotes our values in all that we do – from

developing and distributing products, to working collaboratively across the organizations, and to contributing to the betterment of our communities," he says.

"The best part about working for our company is having a meaningful impact on public health by protecting and enhancing life, while at the same time working for a company with a positive culture, one that invests in its people and its facilities, and equally provides exceptional benefits."

Lobe noted that the company's location in the University of Manitoba's Smartpark Research and Technology Park benefits employees because they have convenient access to all the campus has to offer, from restaurants to discounted memberships at the university's fully-equipped fitness facility. This location also allows the company to work directly with students at the university, whether it's through an internship or a job placement following graduation. Lobe says a significant number of Emergent employees are also U of M grads.

Even though Emergent employees have a university education, the learning doesn't stop once they are hired by the company. Lobe says that Emergent encourages

the professional development of employees through the continuance of formal education.

"We support formal education that is directly related to the employee's current job or has a reasonable likelihood of enhancing the employee's potential for advancement within Emergent," he says. "We provide 100 per cent reimbursement for course costs, books and fees for approved courses up to an annual maximum of \$5,250.

"In addition to supporting formal education programs, Emergent reinforces on-the-job work assignments to support employee development, provides in-house leadership programs and skill development workshops, supports employee participation in external seminars and conferences (including travel expenses), sponsors professional memberships and hosts a local Toastmasters chapter onsite."

Emergent operates a corporate social responsibility program called eGIVE, which stands for Give, Invest, Volunteer in Emergent communities. Each year, the Winnipeg eGIVE team awards a \$400 scholarship to the top science student in every high school in Winnipeg. Emergent also awards three \$3,500 scholarships annually to children of Emergent employees who are pursuing a college or university education.

Employees can take one paid day off through the eGIVE program – which can be taken in hourly increments – to volunteer within the community. They can also propose community events or programs to support through the local employee-led eGIVE committee.

"Emergent is passionate about our corporate eGIVE program, which focuses volunteerism efforts in five key

areas including educating tomorrow's scientific leaders," Lobe says.

When Emergent employees aren't upgrading their education or taking time to reconnect with the community through charitable efforts, they also have the opportunity to take advantage of a wide range of other benefits.

Financially, Emergent offers a registered pension plan, an employee stock purchase plan, an annual performance-based bonus plan and an equity program for certain levels in the organization. The company's rewards and recognition programs allow flexible options to celebrate achievements in a wide range of ways, from on-the-spot, peer-to-peer recognition up to annual individual and team champion recognition with cash awards up to US\$15,000.

Emergent offers wellness programs that include a wellness reimbursement program, onsite yoga classes and wellness challenges sponsored by an employee-led health and wellness committee. The company is also helping its employees reduce their environmental footprint by subsidizing 90 per cent of employee monthly bus passes.

It has been nearly five years since Emergent entered the Winnipeg market through its acquisition of Cangene Corporation. As this anniversary approaches, the company reflects positively on the move and is committed to maintaining a strong corporate culture.

"Coming up to five years since being acquired, Emergent continues to embrace, appreciate, and empower the Winnipeg site," Lobe says. "We are proud to be part of Emergent and gratified that our employees are playing an important role in helping Emergent achieve success globally."



Celebrating 20 Years of People, Products, and Possibilities

For 20 years, Emergent BioSolutions has focused on a singular mission—to protect and enhance life. We are a global life sciences company providing specialty products that address accidental, intentional, and naturally occurring public health threats. Through the talent, drive, and innovation that have shaped our growth, we envision protecting and enhancing millions of lives around the world.



GRANNY'S POULTRY FOCUSED ON THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYEES

BY TODD LEWYS

It's a truism in the business world: a happy employee is a productive employee.

That's a thought that the management team at Granny's Poultry keeps top of mind, says Granny's CEO Craig Evans.

"At Granny's, we focus on the individual and try to operate like a family. With 625 employees, we do our best to understand and meet their needs," Evans says.

Simply put, each employee has their own story and is dealing with a different set of circumstances.

Consequently, it's incumbent upon an employer to be flexible in meeting the disparate needs of their employees.

"If you're not flexible, people will leave," Evans says. "With that in mind, we start by doing our best to accommodate our employees' different schedules with flexible hours and flexible shifts. Some employees have kids they have to ferry around, while others have parents they need to take care of. We're sensitive to those needs."

It's an approach that's worked well.

"Certainly, it's a bit harder to manage, but our employees appreciate that we do whatever we can to help them plan their work schedule around their unique circumstances," Evans adds.

At the same time, the management team also takes time to listen to their employees.

That approach paid off big time in improving workplace safety.

"We have a very diverse workforce – a lot of different ethnicities comprise our staff," Evans notes. "To provide better workplace safety, several members of our staff suggested using pictorial books to make safety training more efficient and easy to understand."

Turns out, the idea worked like a charm.

"This was just one idea and prior to our focus on employee health and safety, we spent \$7.60 for every \$100 of payroll in workers compensation premiums. Now, we spend just 78 cents per \$100 of payroll. Overall, we've realized a savings of \$2.4 million."

Evans adds that Granny's management team also regularly goes out of their way to show their appreciation for employees.

"For example, we introduced flexible benefits – employees can pick the benefits they want, and what works best for them," he says. "We also regularly hand out employee recognition awards for achievements such as long service and perfect attendance."

The show of appreciation doesn't end there.

"We also try to do other little things like having regular lunches for employees or serving ice cream and cookies. We try to delight and surprise our employees to let them know how much we appreciate them."

In short, Granny's management team believes strongly in investing in their workforce – both with time, and money.

"When you spend time and money investing in your employees, it comes back to you in spades," Evans says. "That investment translates into continuity. The way we see it, if you're always training new people, you lose corporate memory and business efficiency. When employees are happy and engaged, they stay on longer. That allows for skills – and corporate culture – to be passed on to new employees."

Evans adds that employees also appreciate being encouraged to volunteer.

"We encourage our staff to volunteer, even during work time. We fully support their involvement, and even pay them to volunteer at places like CancerCare Manitoba and Siloam Mission. Right now, we're involved with the United Way's Koats for Kids program. Our staff is very engaged in volunteering year-round."

Add in initiatives such as regular employee surveys – they're conducted every two years – and the result is a thriving company with low turnover, high productivity and a high level of employee satisfaction.

"Our last employee survey revealed that 92 per cent of our employees felt valued and were proud to work at Granny's," Evans says. "We always want people's thoughts and ideas on how we can make our workplace better. There's a saying: 'Ignore employees at your own peril.' We value them and believe that if we can make their life better, they're going to make our company better."



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Lawton Partners Wealth Management is a leading independent wealth management firm and was recently named one of Manitoba's Top Employers for the first time.

PHOTO BY MANUEL SOUSA

LAWTON PARTNERS MANAGES PEOPLE AND MONEY WITH FLAIR

If you want to play Family Feud, take part in The Amazing Race and throw a few axes, Lawton Partners Wealth Management might be the place for you.

Lawton Partners was named one of Manitoba's Top Employers for the first time this year. They've also been recognized as one of Canada's Top Small and Medium Employers the past three years and were named one of Canada's Outstanding Independent Office and Top Advisor Office by Wealth Professional magazine.

The Winnipeg-based wealth management company boasts an employee social committee that runs a wide variety of fun events throughout the year, including an annual holiday party, a

special RRSP wind-up dinner as well as summer outings. These events have included hiring outside companies to run The Amazing Race scavenger hunt and the Family Feud game show.

Partner Sean Lawton says these and other events are fun and big morale boosters.

"People are our key resource," adds partner Laurie Baird. "We pride ourselves on cultivating a great work environment that supports the employee's ability to do the best job they can for our company and our clients."

Lawton Partners provides opportunities for educational and professional growth to their employees and advisors. The firm has 60 employees and more than 50 per cent have been with the company for more than 15 years. Lawton Partners employees are highly accredited with most of them holding a CFP designation as well as other professional designations.

Lawton Partners is committed to helping employees achieve work-life balance, by allowing flexible hours and telecommuting options.

Everybody has an annual allotment of 10 sick days per year and Lawton Partners employees are able to use them to care for family members, such as kids and aging parents.

Veteran employees can also take advantage of phased-in retirement work options to ease into post-work life.

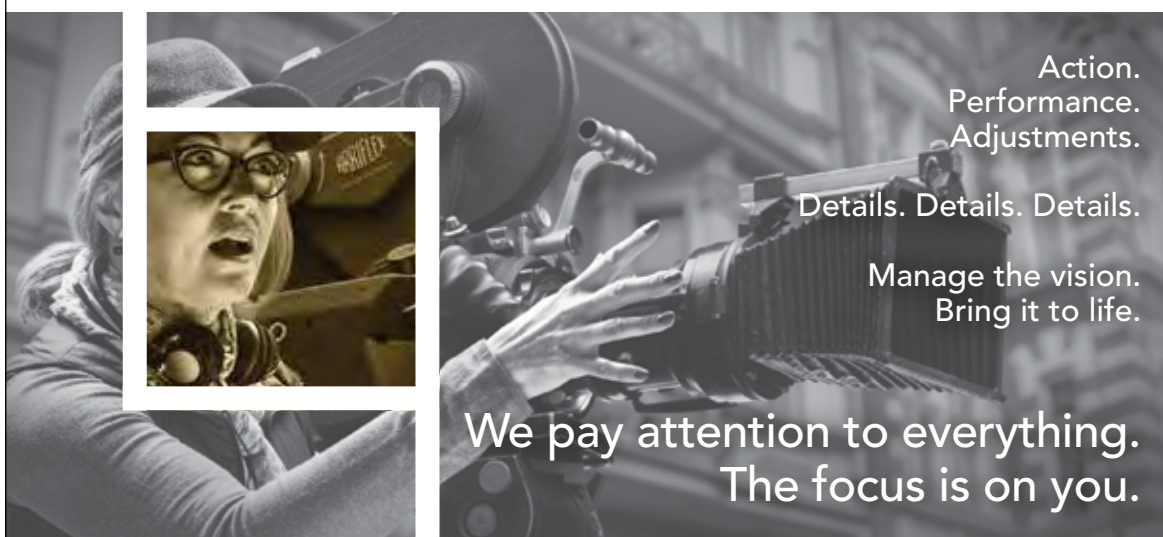
The company also place a high priority on physical health. It recently asked its landlord to secure bike racks to allow employees to commute on two wheels rather than four – showers are included, of course – and it also added a fitness credit to its benefit package that

can be used towards gym memberships, exercise and yoga classes, up to a maximum of \$250 per year.

A program supporting employees' children who compete at national or international sporting events is also available with travel financing of up to \$2,000.

There is a lot of value and knowledge with the company's veteran employees and advisors who serve as mentors and positively contribute to the work environment while they phase-in to retirement.

Lawton Partners is a leading independent wealth management firm established in 1974 and has grown through reputation and referrals. It is a unique boutique financial advisory firm that takes a holistic approach to the management of its clients' financial needs. Lawton Partners have exceptional knowledge and expertise in their respective fields and are firmly established and successful in their industry, both in terms of reputation and employee/client satisfaction. They help high net worth clients protect, build, grow and enjoy their wealth.



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WEALTH MANAGEMENT

MANITOBA BLUE CROSS MAKES EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION THEIR PRIORITY

BY WENDY KING

Firmly rooted and “grown” right here in the Prairies, Manitoba Blue Cross is an independent not-for-profit organization vesting their interests in the health and well-being of Manitobans by providing health, dental, employee assistance, life, disability and travel coverage. And they know that being a good corporate citizen means extending that same sense of care to the team that delivers those services – a key consideration that makes Manitoba Blue Cross one of Manitoba’s top employers.

To achieve that benchmark, President and Chief Executive Officer Shaun Lamoureux says employee satisfaction is paramount.

“It’s all about creating a rewarding environment where employees are recognized, celebrated and rewarded for their contributions to the company,” Lamoureux says.

“That can be found in our flexible work environment, excellent benefits and a culture that recognizes and celebrates the unique skill sets that each of our employees brings to the table.”



The work environment at Manitoba Blue Cross is made up of many parts, big and small, that fit together to form a strong foundation. From the consultations with ergonomic specialists to the physically supportive work stations to the collaborative atmosphere fostered with open concept project rooms, there is a concerted effort to make Manitoba Blue Cross a comfortable place to work.

Work-life balance is encouraged with flexible support for physical, emotional, family and community health, and a comprehensive benefits package that is responsive to the changing needs of the team members.

The company routinely conducts engagement surveys to measure employee satisfaction and gain a clear understanding of what matters most to employees. And rather than “re-invent the wheel,” they also consistently examine what other successful companies are doing to make sure they stay ahead of the curve.

“To take it a step forward, we established a Total Rewards Executive Committee to review and enhance various components of our offerings, including compensation, work-life balance, benefits, and wellness,”

Lamoureux says.

The company gathered feedback from engagement surveys and set priorities and recommendations to enhance current initiatives and introduce others. Information sessions were organized for employees to provide more detail on initiatives and to provide a forum for questions and clarifications. Feedback from those sessions, as well as daily communications, have been positive.

“This October we launched several exciting initiatives under our Total Rewards program, including enhancing our employee benefits plan and implementing flex-time to provide employees with more autonomy to accommodate their personal schedules,” Lamoureux says.

Additionally, Manitoba Blue Cross introduced a formal training and development program called CARE (Creating a Rewarding Environment). Ongoing training and development shows employees they have a “place to grow.” Those opportunities contribute to retention of staff and low turnover, additional markers of a well-developed workplace culture. A high rate of retention gives the company the means to

plan for the future, knowing they have the experienced staff to successfully implement goals and initiatives.

“While we are excited about all of the changes launched this fall, it’s important to note that Total Rewards is a living committee that will continue to address initiatives of wellness, work-life balance and training and development into the future,” Lamoureux says.

By recognizing and valuing the unique roles that individuals play within the company, Manitoba Blue Cross aims to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect, creating a culture marked by its commitment to high legal, ethical, and moral standards. They believe those are the characteristics that best exemplify their company tagline: “The Colour of Caring.”

“Given the business we are in, employee wellness is key,” Lamoureux says.

“All of our efforts and initiatives are done to support the physical, psychological, spiritual and financial needs of our employees.”

Employees get into the Halloween spirit outside of Manitoba Blue Cross.


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TOP EMPLOYER RANKING A CONTINUED PRIORITY FOR MANITOBA HYDRO

BY GEOFF KIRBYSON

Manitoba Hydro has cracked the province's list of top employers for the ninth consecutive year and has no intention of falling off any time soon.

The provincial electric and natural gas utility posted high scores on all eight criteria used by the editors of Canada's Top 100 Employers: physical workplace; work atmosphere and social; health, financial and family benefits; vacation and time off; employee communications; performance management; training and skills development; and community involvement.

Paul Desorcy, Winnipeg-based Director of Human Resources and Workplace Safety and Health for Manitoba Hydro, says maintaining its annual ranking is a high priority because it helps retain existing employees and recruit new ones.

"It's absolutely a selling feature that we use," he says. "We post it on our website and put it in emails. I know people certainly recognize it and every year it's in the media. The idea is, 'if you're in the top 30, you must be a good employer'."

"We are fortunate to get a number of people with very diverse backgrounds and skill-sets from around Manitoba and across Canada (applying for jobs)."



It's important for Hydro to employ a workforce that's representative of the people it serves. For example, about 50 per cent of its employees in the northern part of the province – and about 20 per cent overall – are Indigenous. Desorcy says the utility has focused on growing its Indigenous workforce for a number of years.

"Our goal is to reflect the demographics of Manitoba," he says. "There's a large Indigenous population in the north and for us to have half of our workforce in the North (be) Indigenous is a big accomplishment. We are proud of this accomplishment and we continue to look at ways to grow our Indigenous workforce throughout Manitoba Hydro as a whole."

Following its recent voluntary departure program, the utility lost about 825 skilled and primarily veteran people. That opened the door for younger employees to apply for more senior jobs.

The utility has also been able to enhance many positions by redistributing duties and combining

functions from multiple roles, which can provide more job satisfaction by giving employees more challenging tasks and additional responsibility.

"Employees are making decisions without the endless chain of meetings. We are looking to improve and streamline work processes," he says.

With a smaller workforce, Hydro is also embracing new technologies to help its people work more effectively and efficiently.

"Leveraging technology is very important," he says. "For example, customers can go online to our website and get a lot of outage information that they didn't have access to previously. They'd also have to phone us to make an outage report – now they can easily do it through our website using their mobile device."

Customers are now notified of planned outages – needed for crews to safely maintain or expand the grid – through a pre-recorded phone call. New technology such as robotics is also being looked at for various parts of the internal operations.

Not to be lost amid all of the activity is Manitoba Hydro's number one commitment to providing a safe work environment. Desorcy says that's a crucial element for any employer that has to deal with sometimes hazardous job conditions.

"We want to ensure our employees make safety a priority and do not take short cuts," he says. "Safety always comes first."

"Manitoba Hydro will continue to work towards being a top employer and will look for areas to improve upon. It's not something we're going to lose sight of," he adds. "It's on our radar. We use it and leverage it in our recruiting so if we can address any shortcomings we will."

Manitoba Hydro employees are known across the province for contributing to their communities. In September, a Manitoba Hydro team raised \$4,153 for United Way at the United Way Plane Pull.

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CORE VALUES DRIVE EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AT MANITOBA LIQUOR & LOTTERIES

BY JENNIFER MCFEE

**Caring. Committed.
Collaborative. Creative.
Customer-focused.**

These “five Cs” describe the core values that create the workplace culture at Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries, which has earned recognition as one of Manitoba’s Top Employers every year since 2015.

Brenda Kriss, Director of Organizational Development and Change Management, outlined the role of the Crown corporation that employs approximately 3,000 people across the province.

“We earn revenue in support of important programs in Manitoba, including health care, education, social services, housing and infrastructure. We’re responsible for the sale of liquor and gaming, as well as the wholesale distribution of cannabis inside Manitoba,” she says. “We operate all the Liquor Mart stores, the Casinos of Winnipeg and Manitoba’s video lotto network, as well as playnow.com.

“We pride ourselves on being a continued top employer in the province,” Kriss adds. “It’s the result of our consistent focus on corporate values, at all levels of the organization.”

Last year, Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries conducted an employee survey that identified opportunities to strengthen its workplace culture across the organization. The organization listens to all of its stakeholders through several means, and shares its results with the community in its corporate responsibility report available online.

“Our purpose is to enrich the lives

of Manitobans, and we use our core values in order to support that,” Kriss says. “It fuels our overall strategy to have a common idea about who we are and what we are doing.”

Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries also takes great care when it comes to hiring its team.

“We’re very diverse in terms of the selection of our employees,” Kriss says.

“We’re really mindful in the way that we bring our employees on board. We make sure they know a lot about our organization and how important our customers are to us, as soon as they start.”

With a focus on ongoing education, the organization offers ample opportunities for employees to learn new skills.

“We take great pride in the development and training that we provide for our employees. We have employees who will stay with us for a long period of time. They have the opportunity to work their way up within the organization and take on more responsible roles,” Kriss says.

“We give them development and training that leads them to advancement opportunities. We also have co-op terms, educational assistance and tuition reimbursement.”

Adding to the advantages, Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries offers a comprehensive benefits package, as well health and wellness programs. In addition, employees can also enjoy the opportunity to connect with the community.

“Our employees have the chance to work quite a bit in the communities that we’re involved in. We make

volunteer opportunities very visible to our employees and we have a lot of employees who take advantage of that. We also have charitable giving and employee charity of choice,” Kriss says.

“Our employees are one of our greatest assets in the organization. Our cultural values put people first. It’s all about supporting our people so they can be their very best, which lets us be our very best as an organization, and we can deliver that top-notch service.”

For Coreen Hrabluik, Senior Organizational Change Management Lead, the caring atmosphere was one of the first things she noticed when she joined the organization about a year ago.

“Caring is valued. You can see it in the way people treat each other every day, regardless of level or location, and how work life balance is valued,” Hrabluik says.

“It’s those little day-to-day things, like people say good morning and smile. They hold doors open for other people. They take time to ask you about how your day is going. For me, those are some of the things that struck me when I first came here.”

And this sense of consideration extends beyond the workforce and into the public realm.

“The caring is embedded in everything that we do. That’s why it translates for employees and it also translates for our customers. Everyone matters to us.”

A strong workplace culture drives employees at Liquor Marts, the Casinos of Winnipeg, corporate offices and elsewhere across the province at Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries.



PROUD TO BE RECOGNIZED AS
ONE OF MANITOBA'S TOP 30 EMPLOYERS



MANITOBA PUBLIC INSURANCE TREATING ITS PEOPLE RIGHT

BY JARED STORY

At Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI), exceptional coverage and service starts with treating its employees exceptionally well.

The non-profit Crown corporation has provided basic public automobile insurance to Manitoba motorists since 1971. MPI employs more than 1,800 people, and operates claim and service centres in 12 communities throughout the province.

"We believe investing in our people is integral to fostering a culture of excellence," says Satvir Jatana, MPI Vice-President, Human Resources and Corporate Services, and Chief Human

Resources Officer.

"That's the key to delivering on our mission of providing exceptional coverage and service through the public insurance model. We believe in empowering our employees to provide that exceptional service that you come to expect from MPI, and that is done through creating a day-to-day atmosphere where everyone feels valued."

And that starts on day one at

MPI. New team members are given the tools to thrive through the organization's onboarding program, job-specific training and continuing education support, as well as leadership development to enhance their career opportunities.

For instance, MPI recently rolled out a new in-house mentorship program aimed at women with leadership aspirations within the Corporation.

"A number of leaders from all levels of the organization have stepped forward to mentor other women on their career paths," Jatana says.

"While this doesn't guarantee them a spot in leadership, it helps build confidence and provides them with resources and support to excel."

At MPI, they know that life doesn't stop the minute you sit down at your desk.

By providing benefits that meet the needs of its employees and their families, the organization strives to give its team the tools to strengthen their overall physical, mental and

emotional well-being.

From generous maternity, parental and adoptive leave programs to robust employee and family assistance, including on-site mental health workshops and online resources, to personal wellness funding and fitness classes, MPI encourages work-life balance that works for each individual.

That also includes physical locations that make the day a little easier.

At its head office in downtown Winnipeg, employees can easily enjoy all the amenities of cityplace shopping centre – including a food court and fitness facility – as well as nearby Bell MTS Place and the Millennium Library.

Elsewhere, Jatana says all of MPI's claim and service centres are welcoming and comfortable places to work that include lunchrooms and collaborative spaces to share ideas.

While the Corporation helps its staff to succeed, it also encourages them to be active in the communities that they serve. For instance, the organization is a strong supporter of United

Way Winnipeg.

"The neat thing about the United Way campaign is it's our employees that take the lead. They design the campaign," Jatana says. "Every year we're amazed with its success and we continue to beat the previous years' results, both in participation and our level of contribution to such a worthy cause."

Growth and improvement aren't just buzzwords at MPI – they're built into the culture of excellence the Corporation continually strives to achieve for staff and customers alike.

"MPI is always looking to evolve in how we serve Manitobans and meet their needs. We do the same thing for our employees," Jatana says.

The employee-led annual United Way campaign is one example of MPI's efforts to empower staff to create a culture of excellence throughout the Corporation.

PHOTO BY TRISTAN FAST

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PALLISER FURNITURE SHARES CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

BY SHARON CHISVIN

A lot has changed in the furniture manufacturing industry since the founding of Palliser Furniture Upholstery Ltd. back in 1944, but Palliser's commitment to its customers, products and personnel has never wavered.

That personnel now numbers more than 2,000 people, 643 of whom are based in Winnipeg where the company's head office is located.

The Lexington Park headquarters, in the heart of the McLeod Industrial Park, is not far from the East Kildonan home where Abram Albert (A.A.) DeFehr first began building furniture in his basement.

After enjoying some early success, DeFehr, who had emigrated from Russia as a teenager, moved his basement workshop into a refurbished chicken barn and from there into larger quarters. He quickly became a key player in the furniture manufacturing business in Manitoba

and across Canada.

Almost 75 years later, with A.A.'s son Art DeFehr at the helm of the company's board of directors and Art's son-in-law Peter Tielmann serving as President and CEO, Palliser Furniture is the largest furniture manufacturer in Canada. In addition to its Winnipeg production facility, furniture outlet and real estate holdings, the company has three manufacturing plants in Mexico and distributes its custom-made furniture upholstery products throughout North America.

Palliser's success is due to the high quality of its product, exceptional customer service and the vision and determination of the DeFehr family.

But is also due to the hard work, diligence and loyalty of its hundreds of employees.

Those employees, including some who have been with Palliser for 40 years or more, are committed to the company because the company is committed to them. That shared devotion is the reason that Palliser Furniture, is repeatedly recognized as one of Canada's Best Managed Companies and tenure averages at 12 years among Palliser staff.

"Palliser employees are at the very core of our competitive advantage and are the reason for our continuous success," Tielmann says.

It is logical, therefore, that the

A group of Palliser staff at the company's head office in Winnipeg. Palliser's headquarters comprises administrative, executive, product development and manufacturing work spaces, allowing employees to work collaboratively and to make connections across the organization.

PHOTO BY DARCY FINLEY

company do everything it can to keep its employees engaged, happy and proud to be part of the Palliser team.

"The DeFehr family views success as financial and business success," adds Art DeFehr, "but it is equally important that it works for the employees and for the community."

While Palliser's efforts on behalf of the community are largely channeled through the DeFehr Foundation, the company's efforts on behalf of its employees are reflected in its daily interactions and through a variety of policies, programs and opportunities.

"Palliser is committed to a culture of diversity and development," explains Andrea Aiello, the company's Director of Human Resources.

Following the example set by its founder, Palliser consistently hires refugees and newcomers to Canada and works closely with local immigration agencies to ensure their successful integration and job satisfaction.

"Training, education and development are cornerstones of our culture, and supported through targeted programming for all areas of our business," Aiello says.

Palliser, she continues, encourages personal skill development for all of its employees. It supports and reimburses continuing education at all levels, whether it is for a quick Excel course or a two-year MBA, and it invites new hires to participate in structured training programs.

These programs, such as the Career Engagement Program, incorporate mentoring, career counseling, innovation training and even book clubs, as a means of inspiring staff to enhance their skills, their earning potential, opportunities for advancement and personal sense of accomplishment.

The company also offers co-op

learning opportunities and flexible work hours.

"We pride ourselves on being flexible where we can, accommodating family constraints, for example, such as daycare drop off and pick up," Aiello says. "As a manufacturer, it is difficult for us to make mass accommodations, so we take the approach that our leaders should have personal relationships with each team member, and know which accommodations are meaningful. For some it will be an adjusted start time, for others it will be the provision of quiet space for religious observances."

Palliser also invite employees to share in the company's success via customized bonus plans, social events and continued investment in each employee through education and training. In turn, their employees give back through charity drives in the local community and to each other in times of hardship and need.

"We are fortunate to maintain a family-feel after 74 years. We continue to see this caring for one another when team members pass, when tragedies strike homelands, and when we need to step in and step up to support one another," Aiello says.

"Through the sharing of corporate goals and a vision for future growth and innovation all employees are encouraged to embrace personal and collective development to make ourselves, and our products, the very best in class."

Whether those employees have been with the company for four years or four decades, whether they are new to Canada or third generation Winnipeggers, and whether they are fabric designers, forklift operators or furniture assemblers, they are equally valued and respected for their contributions to Palliser's long-term success.

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Staff and faculty participate in a RED Forum workshop that focused on using Virtual Reality (VR) in the classroom.

event for staff and faculty, by staff and faculty, and it's a great opportunity for employees to get together, network, and learn from one another."

The college also offers several online training programs, available to staff and faculty at their fingertips, 24-7. This year, RRC added Lynda.com to the college toolkit, enabling further access to a variety of new learning opportunities. Lynda.com is now available to all staff, faculty and students, and provides free, unlimited access to 6,000-plus videos and courses at the click of a button.

Those interested in learning outside of office hours also have access to RRC's own on-campus and online courses which include over 100 personal and professional development programs, including full- and part-time certificate programs.

All college employees are eligible to enroll in continuing education programs at any of the Red River College campuses, and tuition fees are waived if there is space available in the course.

Employees are also provided with financial support for tuition towards the completion of undergraduate and graduate level degrees, and subsidies for professional licensing and professional fees to all employees who are required to maintain those designations for employment.

"As a college we are committed to educating the community and we are proud that this includes our very own dedicated staff and faculty members," Gudmundson says.

"As educators, leaders, researchers and innovators committed to education, meeting the changing needs of industry, and contributing to the province's economic growth, we are proud to say with great enthusiasm: what we're doing is working."

WHAT THEY'RE DOING IS WORKING AT RED RIVER COLLEGE

Some Red River College alumni love going to school so much, they end up joining the 'family' business after graduation.

This is the reality for more than half of Red River College's (RRC) 2,300 full- and part-time employees – RRC alumni who end up coming back to the college for a new rewarding challenge: educating the next generation of students.

They return because they know Red River is committed to student success and educating and training a highly-

skilled workforce. They stay because they believe in what the college is providing – for career development, for personal growth, and for a bright future.

"When it comes to educating students, providing training and research opportunities, and meeting the needs of industry – what we're doing is working," says Melanie

Gudmundson, RRC's Chief Human Resource Officer. "And it's the dedicated efforts of our staff and faculty members who make this statement a reality everyday with their commitment to the college and our students."

"This is why we are continually striving to build a work environment that has programs and supports, including training and professional development opportunities that ensure staff and faculty success."

Learning is a core value of Red River College, which is committed to providing an exceptional learning environment for employees as well as students. The college focuses on staff learning and development activities and events, led by industry experts – most of whom are all members of the Red River College community.

"Every week you will hear of a different department hosting an event.

From research lunch and learns, to traditional sweat lodge ceremonies, to mental health speaker series, to daily fitness classes – there are many opportunities for staff to engage in new professional and personal development activities. This is something we encourage all employees to take advantage of," Gudmundson says.

The college has also continued to introduce more formalized internal training opportunities to encourage continuous lifelong learning and professional growth. These include major initiatives like RED Forum, a day-long professional development event for all RRC employees from all campuses.

"RED Forum focuses on relationships, education and the direction of the college, and offers over 30 different sessions throughout the day for employees to choose from," Gudmundson says. "It's an

WHAT WE'RE DOING IS WORKING.



St. Amant's expanded clinical team works with the Jordan's Principle: Child First Initiative in remote northern Manitoba communities.

SUPPLIED PHOTO

Employment opportunities abound at this ever-growing organization in all kinds of roles. From clinical staff in the areas of psychology and social work, to nurses and administrative positions, there are always opportunities to join the team. The most common opportunities are in direct support, a role where you work hands-on with people with disabilities to ensure that they are participating in life in a meaningful way. This work encourages staff to build relationships in the community, with family members and most importantly, with the people they are supporting. This is a great job for people who are motivated by supporting and encouraging choice and independence and are rewarded by seeing people achieve their goals.

St. Amant employees are generous and definitely care about the people they support. In fact, St. Amant has one of the highest staff engagement rates in fundraising to support the St. Amant Foundation. Every year, staff volunteer at the St. Amant Foundation's signature fundraising event, the Free the Spirit Festival.

"Staff see the benefits of their donations and volunteer efforts. We've seen so many exciting outcomes thanks to those who donate, such as two men taking a trip of a lifetime to the Rockies, a new wheelchair-accessible van for one of St. Amant's community homes and major renovations to living areas at our complex care facility," says Juliette Mucha, Director of the St. Amant Foundation.

Staff are truly part of the community and also support other local charities such as the Christmas Cheer Board, Winnipeg Harvest, Manitoba Marathon, Dragon Boat Festival and the Movement Centre Bike Race. For the past two years, St. Amant was represented as an employer in the Winnipeg Pride Parade.

St. Amant is proud of the work environment and organizational culture that has made it one of Manitoba's Top Employers for the eighth year.

EMPLOYEES ARE ST.AMANT'S BIGGEST ASSET

St. Amant has over 1,800 staff across the province and together they support Manitobans who have a developmental disability, acquired brain injury or autism, to reach their full potential.

As a leader in Manitoba for 60 years, St. Amant offers innovative services that promote meaningful relationships, valued social roles, independence, human rights and quality of life. St. Amant's person-centred, broad service approach supports the person while also supporting and honouring families and natural support systems.

The organization unveiled its five-year strategic plan at a town hall earlier this fall. To ensure the plan is relevant and that St. Amant is indeed meeting the needs of its community and heading in the right direction, the strategic planning process involved wide stakeholder consultation with families, funders, partners and staff.

"We have a strong history of serving the most vulnerable, of offering services where no one else would. That mission, tenacity and compassion of the Grey Nuns will continue as we move through the next five years of our strategic plan," says President and CEO John Leggat.

"Our community, who embraced the development of this plan and gave of themselves in its creation, will continue to be involved as we move along our journey. We rely on these groups to help us stay the course and to ensure we are aware and addressing the most pressing needs. Together we will make our community

better, stronger and inclusive."

Knowing that employees really are its biggest asset, St. Amant works hard to offer excellent support to staff. Staff have access to excellent training and development opportunities. Some are formal and required for their role and many are self-directed.

Since introducing its English at Work for newcomers program in 2014, more than 125 staff and volunteers have directly benefitted from more than 10,000 student hours of English language training and support, which includes one-on-one tutoring at head office or in a community home in addition to classroom time. This group organizes events that promotes various cultures while also enhancing the profile and benefit of a diverse workplace. The organization hosts an on-site Toastmasters group, offers many health and wellness benefits, such as a low-cost gym, mediation and mindfulness activities and encourages staff to work together to come up with new and innovative ideas.



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PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE A HIGH PRIORITY AT ST. JOHN'S-RAVENSCOURT SCHOOL

BY JENNIFER MCFEE

For the 11th straight year, St. John's-Ravenscourt School (SJR) has earned top marks as one of Manitoba's top employers.

"We are very proud to be on Manitoba's Top Employers list for more than a decade," says Head of School Jim Keefe.

"It's great news and I think it's a reflection of the commitment that all of our community members make to advance the success of the school."

Founded in 1820, SJR is the oldest school in Western Canada and the second oldest independent school in the nation. The co-educational university prep school has students from both the local community as well as boarding students from Canada and around the world. Currently, the Kindergarten to Grade 12 school has a population of 865 day and boarding students.

Over the years, 18 Rhodes scholars have emerged from the prestigious school, which is also well known for its students' achievements in public speaking, debating and many other academic competitions.

"Virtually 100 per cent of our students go on to university entry," Keefe adds, "and many with significant scholarship offers."

In addition to offering an exceptional education to its students, SJR provides an appealing workplace for 160 employees, including more than 140 who work at the school full time.

"In our working environment, we offer a full-service cafeteria with different menus as well as coffee, tea and fresh fruit," Keefe says.

"We have staff lounges, and our employees have access to our fitness facilities. We also offer yoga classes through a local instructor, and we have faculty who play in our indoor hockey arena."



St. John's-Ravenscourt employs 160 people including 140 full-time staff and is the second oldest independent school in the country.

Located on a 23-acre site nestled at the neck of the Red River, the school's grounds offer ample opportunities for staff members to enjoy a stroll in the scenic setting and to relax along the riverside walk.

In terms of benefits, SJR offers the security of a defined benefit pension plan while also helping employees prepare for their future through retirement planning assistance. For staff members who are near retirement, the school offers phased-in work options to ease the transition.

"We have a great health plan and various other wellness activities," Keefe says. "It's also important to us to recognize our long-standing faculty through our outstanding service and emeritus awards."

Adding to the advantages, new administrative employees receive three

weeks of paid vacation to start. With a focus on flexibility, they also receive three paid personal days off, as well as a holiday shutdown period between Christmas and New Year. For teachers, they start their employment with 12 weeks of holidays each year.

"Colleagues have also said that our maternity leave is very favourable," Keefe says. "We top up mothers to 90 per cent salary for 27 weeks. Then for new fathers and adoptive parents, we top up payments to 90 per cent salary for 10 weeks."

In addition, employees have the option of extending their leave into an unpaid leave of absence.

As a top educator, SJR recognizes the importance of lifelong learning by encouraging education for employees at

all levels.

"We offer our faculty and staff professional development opportunities," Keefe says. "Many faculty take advantage of higher education courses by taking master's programs or by attending other professional development programs across North America."

St. John's-Ravenscourt School has established a well-earned reputation for excellence throughout Canada and beyond, and it all starts with a dedication to details and relationships built on respect.

"We are here to provide an outstanding education for our students and families," Keefe says. "That is only possible because we have a faculty and staff that are committed to excellence while always striving to achieve our mission, vision and values."

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STANDARDAERO CONTINUES TO GROW IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

BY JIM BENDER

An innovative aerospace company in Winnipeg is soaring to new heights as it welcomes growth in all areas of its business. Founded in 1911, StandardAero is one of the aerospace industry's largest independent maintenance, repair and overhaul providers with a large presence in the Manitoba aerospace community.

To support the company's growth, StandardAero is actively finishing redesign of a 70,000 square foot facility purchased to accommodate it's need for expansion of additional production and office space, retrofitting another one of their facilities to bring in new helicopter engine work the Winnipeg location has never seen before, and is looking at additional opportunities to expand its facilities to accommodate future growth.

"It's never been a more exciting time in our company's 107-year history with the amount of growth we are experiencing," says Stacey McLeish, StandardAero's Vice-President of Human Resources.

"There are lots of opportunities for our employees to grow within our company and for others who want to join our StandardAero team," adds McLeish, citing the company is actively recruiting to fill

many positions including technical, engineering, professional and leadership opportunities.

Because of the way StandardAero both treats its employees and the creative way it recruits new ones, it was named a Manitoba Top Employer once again this year.

"We are very proud to continue to be recognized as one of Manitoba's Top Employers," McLeish says. "We take a great deal of pride in it."

To support it's recruitment in the industry, StandardAero encourages its employees to refer their friends through the company's employee referral bonus program.

"We very much value our employees because they know what our company culture is like and who will fit well with our organization," McLeish says. "We have had a high rate of success and appreciate all the referrals received as we continue to recruit more individuals to join

our organization."

StandardAero also reaches out to the next generation of employees with apprenticeships and co-ops, paid internships and summer employment opportunities. Two examples include partnering with Tec Voc High School's Aerospace Manufacturing Maintenance Orientation Program (AMMOP) and Maples Collegiate's Aviation Trades and Technology program to offer students the chance to get some real work experience in the aerospace industry through tours, one-day mentorships and dedicated work experience placements, McLeish says. It also offers job opportunities to new grads coming out of college and university programs. In fact, StandardAero was recognized once again this year for being one of Canada's Top Employers for Young People, she says.

As a result, in an era where many organizations are downsizing,

StandardAero continues to grow and expand its workforce, which employs about 1,300 people across seven main facilities in Winnipeg and about 6,000 people globally, McLeish says.

StandardAero also encourages its employees to keep their skills sharp through a variety of in-house training initiatives, along with tuition subsidies for courses related directly or indirectly to their current positions. These include technical, professional and leadership training "to enhance their skills," McLeish says.

"We're in growth mode in all areas of our business so we're investing significantly in training," she adds. "Aerospace is an industry that continues to evolve and our employees are adaptable and innovative in keeping up with changing demands."

McLeish, who has been with the company for 19 years, refers to the work environment as a close-knit

family setting where employees collaborate and find ways to have fun with each other in the workplace. That includes enjoying recreational activities together outside of work hours such as paint night outings, organized V.I.P bus tour during Folklorama, fitness bootcamps, hockey, basketball, and softball leagues.

StandardAero was recently awarded the Lieutenant Governor Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Community by a Business which recognizes excellence in the leadership of Manitoba's corporate community through their business endeavors and civic community leadership. Volunteering opportunities also play a big role in the company's social environment as the company is actively involved in a number of different charities, including the United Way, Habitat for Humanity, Winnipeg Harvest, Christmas Cheer Board, Siloam Mission and many more.



StandardAero is proud to be recognized as one of Manitoba's Top Employers

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StandardAero

TRUE NORTH SPORTS + ENTERTAINMENT TEAM RISING TOGETHER

For the second season, the motto Rise Together is uniting fans, but those two simple words are also engrained in the day-to-day of all employees at True North Sports + Entertainment. Long before it was introduced as a tag line for hockey fans, it was a mantra that the team off the ice was living.

"What we experienced this year with the whiteout was both remarkable and humbling," says John Olfert, Chief Operating Officer with True North. "While it was noted that a deep playoff run was uncharted territory for our players, it was similarly new ground for our employees. With the elevated attention that the playoffs brought to our team, facility and city, we were encouraged and pleased by how our full and part-time employees rose to the challenges that came with the street parties, national broadcasts, viewing parties, and the excitement of playoff hockey."

While the experience brought new challenges that pushed everyone in the organization beyond their comfort zones, they were challenges that employees were ready and willing to take on, equipped with the same support and empowerment that guide their everyday.

"Our teams are incredibly hard working, dedicated, and resourceful," says Olfert. "This coupled with our values of Team, Do the Right Thing, Trust and Respect, and Continuous Improvement, served as the foundation for all the firsts faced by employees and True North."

As Vice-President of Human Resources, Dawn Haus is a culture and engagement lead and has the pleasure of working with nearly everyone across the True North organization.

"Our mission and vision are not just words on paper, they really do guide us, and this starts with ownership and senior leadership," emphasizes Haus. "The organization really and truly strives to live up to our values."

True North's vision is to be a source of pride for the community and this is a role the organization does not take lightly.

"True North has always strived to be an asset in our community

and to make contributions that elicit pride, but we got to see it and live it during the playoffs in such a grand way and on such a large stage," says Olfert.

The contributions of each and every employee in their own respective areas were key to creating the bigger picture.

"Our whole team gave so much of themselves during this time," says Haus. "We saw and overcame challenges we have never faced, but in the end, it was rewarding to feel a part of the excitement and know that we continue to grow together through these experiences."

While the playoffs got much of the spotlight, this vision extends to all facets of True North's diverse operations, from the True North Youth Foundation (TNYF) and Camp Manitou to Bell MTS Iceplex, Burton Cummings Theatre and True North Real Estate Development. Thanks to the efforts of all employees, True North was able to participate in our community in a variety of ways, including by welcoming the first tenants to True North Square's office tower at 242 Hargrave St. and unveiling the public plaza; providing a patron experience that garnered recognition for Bell MTS Place as the number one NHL arena and one of North America's best venues for overall entertainment (Stadium Journey magazine); and by hosting the inaugural Project 11 (one of the core programs of the TNYF) Mental Wellness

Summit at the Burton Cummings Theatre.

Last year was no exception to True North's continued expansion either, as it grew its partnership with local start-up, Fannex, becoming an equity investor, and extended its concert operations with TN Touring, filling a niche for bringing exciting Broadway-calibre touring productions to mid-size arenas in Canada's medium and smaller markets.

With an organization that continues to grow and diversify, change and challenges are constant. Through culture and engagement, True North's team of more than 250 full-time and 1,200 event and part-time employees have shown a willingness and ability to continually raise their own bar.

"Our people are responsible for bringing our organization's vision and goals to life, day after day, and year after year. This truth is not taken for granted by anyone at True North," says Haus.

In an effort to continue raising the bar, employees are being offered leadership development courses newly introduced this year, building on the 7-Habits training offered over the past three years.

True North pursues building community among its own employee teams with healthy meals served on game and event days, organization-wide luncheons, team building events like viewing parties, employee hockey, summer intramurals, and an annual employee Camp Day, as well as inviting employees'

families to the annual holiday skate at Bell MTS Place, coupled with the perks of periodic event tickets and discounts at Jets Gear stores.

Onsite fitness facilities and an engaging employee health and wellness program add to the benefits package which includes fully paid health and dental benefits and a matched retirement savings plan that also offers annual group and one-on-one consulting opportunities.

True North pursues the goal of being a dynamic organization and special attention is paid to keep all employee teams connected. Internal communication tools, like the quarterly Our True North magazine, a newly launched employee web portal, and periodic Synergy Sessions, where departments report and present to one another, help everyone to keep pace with other teams.

Though there may be increased focus and attention on the Jets and on the entire True North organization following last season's playoff run, Olfert has a quiet confidence in the True North team. "Like our hockey teams, we will continue to work together, grow together and rise together."

True North Sports + Entertainment has a growing workforce of more than 250 full-time employees and 1,200 part-time employees.

PHOTO BY JONATHAN KOZUB



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PROUD TO BE ONE OF
MANITOBA'S TOP 30 EMPLOYERS

SUPPORTING PEOPLE PART OF UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA'S CULTURE

BY GEOFF KIRBYSON

Mark O'Riley, Director of Learning and Organizational Development at the University of Manitoba, says that while he is very happy that the school is being recognized as a top employer, he is not surprised. Supporting its people is part of the U of M culture.

"If we want to keep drawing the best people, we have to be on our game and make sure people feel they can make a difference in a real and substantive way," O'Riley says.

The province's largest post-secondary institution has been selected as one of Manitoba's Top Employers for the sixth consecutive time in the annual national survey.

The focus that the university places on the quality of its work environment is integrated throughout its strategic plan. It's clear that employee development and overall health and wellness is integral to its operations — from Success Through Wellness, a mental health strategy aimed to reduce the stigma of mental illness, to initiatives like Live Well @Work Week, an event with sessions on diverse topics like stress reduction, yoga and mindfulness. In addition, there are 145 development sessions offered to staff annually, as well as employee recognition programs through the annual Awards of Excellence, in order to nurture a high-calibre work environment that is both supportive and inclusive.

"We also have many members of our community working on inclusion and diversity. Our university is committed to advancing Indigenous achievement and

to creating an accessible community," O'Riley says.

"We're making sure we do all we can to build on a welcoming environment in order to recruit more great people to work at the U of M."

Roxanne Tackie, an Awards Officer in the U of M's Faculty of Grad Studies, knows about the accolades first-hand. She received an Award of Excellence for inclusion relating to her work on an event to celebrate Black History Month earlier this year.

"That meant a lot to me personally, for the university to recognize me, the event and the amount of work that was put into it. It makes me want to work on big events like that again. It motivates you to go above and beyond in the future because people appreciate what you're doing," she says.

By recognizing the work of its people, Tackie says the U of M is setting itself apart from other employers in Winnipeg and

universities across the country.

"I've worked elsewhere where people have been recognized for years of service, but I've never seen an award for something specific," she says.

Unionized employees and administration workers initiated the Awards of Excellence program to ensure that support staff were consistently being recognized. The awards celebrate a number of areas — leadership, service, teamwork, diversity and inclusion and a president's award honouring careers of commitment.

What O'Riley loves is how the awards let people know that what they do matters.

"They increase loyalty and performance and really engage people when they know that what they do is appreciated. The nominators talk about the people they're nominating and the difference they have made for them," he says.

Professional development is another

Participants at the Excellence in Supervision/Management Fundamentals workshop offered to employees at the University of Manitoba.



high priority at the U of M. Programs like Management Fundamentals and the Leaders Learning Program offer sessions designed to support leaders at various levels throughout the organization.

When Tackie completed a certificate in supervisory training in 2016, she was appreciative of the encouragement and back-up she received from her department.

"They were very supportive of me missing days at my desk to go for professional development, even when some of it didn't relate to my current job. You're learning more about the processes you don't normally do so that you feel confident to apply for a position that comes with more responsibility," she says.

Supporting the growth and development of staff is key, O'Riley adds.

"We try to make our programs as interactive and practical as possible. We want to give members of our staff the opportunity to tap into their true potential."

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WESTMAN COMMUNICATIONS GROUP EMPHASIZES EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

BY TODD LEWYS

Employers often talk about the importance of recognizing the pivotal role employees play in the success of a company, but it's something they sometimes don't do enough about.

By contrast, the leadership team at Westman Communications Group makes a point of regularly acknowledging the sterling efforts of their workforce, says Westman's Chief Marketing Officer John Quail.

"It's important to recognize both team and individual success in a timely fashion, so we do it every quarter (of the business year)," he says. "At our most recent get-together, we gave away some nice prizes – Jets tickets, and a tablet – to celebrate how our employees' hard work has made our company such a success."

Westman's leadership team is always open to suggestions, especially ones that promote team building, adds Sonia Cole, the Brandon-based company's human resources manager.

"We have a very diverse and inclusive culture here, and we encourage them to bring forward ideas," she says. "When several of our staff members suggested putting on an authentic Diwali luncheon, we embraced the idea. It was a great success. Then, another group of our staff put on an authentic Italian lunch. It was also well-received."

The overall idea is to build a comfortable yet dynamic work atmosphere that promotes teamwork and efficiency, Quail says.

"It's easier to get good people

when your company is viewed as being a great place to work. With that in mind, we encourage our employees to share their thoughts with us. We believe there's always a better way to do something. The best ideas on how to get better often come from our employees."

That confidence to approach supervisors with ideas is derived from the fact the Westman's employees know they're valued by management.

"We do things like offering \$500 scholarships to employees' children when they go off to university and running mentorship programs where long-term employees are encouraged to share their wisdom and skills with new employees to pass on our culture and values," he adds. "People appreciate the scholarship program and are really pleased to be part of the program, which is in its inaugural run."

Additionally, staff receive training in areas such as customer experience and supervision.

"Currently, we have two people taking courses on effective supervision at Assiniboine Community College," Cole says. "When they come back, we expect them to pass on what they learned to their peers so they can use the knowledge to get better at what they do."

A thoughtful benefits program

– Westman cheerfully matches employees' RSP contributions – has also aided in attracting and retaining employees.

In addition to comprehensive medical and dental benefits, Westman employees also have access to a "flex-plan," Cole notes.

"It covers things like gym memberships, RSP contributions, even the purchase of a new tablet. Employees can spend up to \$500 and are reimbursed \$250 on eligible expenses."

Family initiatives are also front-and-centre at Westman, she adds.

"As already noted, we hand out scholarships to employees' dependents. We also send two staff children to our co-op leadership conference, sponsor movie nights, have a Christmas party for kids at the Victoria Inn, and promote wellness initiatives. We even sponsor sports teams of our employees' kids."

Finally, Westman's management team encourages employees to be community-minded as Westman is a co-operative.

"They've embraced that," Quail says. "Our employees are always giving their time and support to local organizations and charities. We are always volunteering in various communities at festivals, skating



shows, curling bonspiels and numerous other events. With our Community TV Programming regional channels, we are also able to show what happens in our communities to everyone across the region. Our radio and business groups provide free airtime and discounted communication services to local charities."

Feeling valued and appreciated, members of Westman's workforce tend to go above and beyond the call of duty on a regular basis.

Westman Communications Group has a diverse and inclusive workplace culture and encourages employees to bring forward ideas.

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WINNIPEG AIRPORTS AUTHORITY BRINGS EMPLOYEES INTO CONVERSATION

BY PAT REDIGER

Winnipeg Airports Authority (WAA) is transforming its employee experience to new heights.

"While we have a lot of the same benefits and perks that other organizations have, I think the most important thing about working here is that we all live the same commitment to our community and we've created a culture that's worked for us," says WAA Director of People and Culture Kim Bilcowski. "I think that makes us unique."

WAA is a community-based, non-share capital corporation that operates, manages, maintains and invests in the Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport. WAA Director of Communications and Public Affairs Tyler MacAfee says that employees have truly bought into the organization's mission.

"The first three words of our vision statement are 'with our community.' As an airport, we're

here to facilitate everything that the community needs, from people visiting their families, to business travellers to online packages that come by air and show up the next day at your door," MacAfee says. "This vision extends back to the company itself and is the reason why we exist. That becomes embedded into the culture here."

As Bilcowski explains, the WAA enforces its "why" by creating a culture of listening to one another, which she says starts at the top.

"Our President and CEO (Barry Rempel) communicates with employees in a number of ways, whether it's at our employee town hall sessions or a video newsletter that's posted on our intranet," Bilcowski says. "We have a senior management team that's open to talk to anybody at any time. We hold regular union-management committee meetings where we talk about the 'why' and also about the 'how'."

Bilcowski says WAA has spent the past several years examining its processes and seeking out ways to be more efficient through different technologies and trying to be innovative in how it performs. She noted that the organization

has adopted LEAN principles to get frontline employees involved in "breaking down the barriers to innovation and creativity."

"When it comes to something even as simple as reorganizing and cleaning up certain areas such as our new terminal, getting our employees involved in the problem solving has been an enormous step forward for us," she says.

WAA places a strong emphasis on the wellness of its employees. It encourages employees to keep fit by providing free memberships to two onsite fitness facilities that feature a full range of exercise equipment. WAA also brings in speakers and companies to deliver diverse wellness programming for employees.

"We try to have programs come from the grassroots. It goes back to listening to our people and finding out what they're looking for," Bilcowski says. "You can buy a program from anybody and it sounds really great on paper, but it doesn't work if that's not what your employees are looking for. We look at wellness from a holistic perspective: body, mind, soul and spirit."

A popular program for employees is the harvest

garden. For 21 years, employees have had the opportunity to maintain a garden at the airport.

"In the first week of June, we have a day where our employees help plant the garden," Bilcowski says. "Once the garden is planted, we have employees and volunteers take care of that garden throughout June and July. In late August and early September, we start harvesting it with the help of Winnipeg Harvest, which then distributes it to people in the city or surrounding areas."

WAA also stands out because it offers flexible work arrangements to employees. This includes up to five paid family days, which can be scheduled by employees throughout the year. The organization also offers generous maternity and parental leave top-up payments for new moms (to 93 per cent of salary for 32 weeks) and parental leave top-up for new fathers and adoptive parents (to 93 per cent of salary for 15 weeks).

"We want to make sure that we're providing a good work-life balance," Bilcowski says. "That goes back to talking to our employees, having a good understanding of who they are, and creating an environment where people feel that they're being heard and are working together."

A big part of what makes Winnipeg Airports Authority unique is the commitment of its employees to their community.

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waa.ca

Photography courtesy of Laird Kay



The WCB Wheelin' Warriors show their support of the Heart and Stroke Foundation by riding in the annual Big Bike ride.

WCB PASSIONATELY COMMITTED TO ITS STAFF

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) knows that a large part of its success over the years is due to the passion and commitment of its staff. That passion and commitment have been demonstrated in countless ways in recent years, as the WCB has worked to modernize its system and deliver even better value for Manitoba workers and employers.

"We recognize that our people are at the forefront of our success and want to continue to make the WCB a great place to work," says WCB President and CEO Winston Maharaj. "We're committed to evolving our workplace so that we can attract and retain talented staff."

The WCB's recruitment and retention efforts are based on four themes – growth, engagement,

wellness and security – that capture the essence of what it means to work at the WCB and highlight areas of focus for the organization.

"The four themes reflect who we are and what we have to offer," says Shannon Earle, Vice-President, Human Resources and Strategy. "It's a way for us to package what new staff can expect when they walk through the door and ultimately it's the key to

having many of our employees spend their careers with us."

Experienced and knowledgeable staff who have progressed through different positions and departments are vital to the organization's success.

An example is Dave Kramer, who started his career at the WCB as a Records Clerk, hired as a summer student while attending university. During his 23 years at the WCB, Dave

has held several positions, gaining expertise and experience in various areas throughout the organization. In 2014 Dave became one of the first staff members to join the newly created SAFE Work Manitoba division. Earlier this year, Dave was promoted to Director of Assessment Services, taking on an important role where he will lead the implementation and final updates to the WCB's new rate model system.

"Modernizing a system that insures 77 per cent of Manitoba's workforce and processes more than 28,000 claims each year is no small task," says Maharaj. "We couldn't have done it without experienced staff who know the ins and outs of our organization and have dedicated themselves to professional growth and development."

The WCB supports staff development with on-the-job training, employer-sponsored learning opportunities and career planning services.

Opportunities for growth are just one way the WCB fosters engagement among its staff. Another is the opportunity to work on challenging and rewarding projects that further the company's vision: "A trusted partner, insuring today and building a safer tomorrow."

One area that has seen both great challenges and rewards is Return to Work Program Services, formed just three years ago.

"Our Return to Work Program Services team has done incredible work to build a consulting service from the ground up," says Darren Oryniak, Vice-President, Compensation Services. "The response from employers has been incredibly positive and the team has stepped up to meet a huge demand for their services."

Return to Work Program Services is just at the start of their journey, as the WCB begins carving out a new corporate strategy that focuses on return to work as an essential component of ensuring the health and safety of workers and workplaces.

With its focus on promoting health and safety in Manitoba workplaces, it comes as no surprise that the WCB is also committed to health and wellness for its own workforce. The WCB's mental health and safety strategy was launched in 2016 and has since become entrenched in the organization.

"We help workers and employers at some of the most difficult and stressful moments of their lives. Taking care of our employees' mental health helps them provide compassionate, caring service when it's needed most," Earle says.

The WCB's focus on compassion extends to the community at large. The WCB is a long-standing supporter of many charitable organizations, including United Way, the Heart and Stroke Foundation and Koats for Kids.

"We're in the business of helping people, and that extends to not only our own staff but the broader community as a whole," Maharaj says.

The WCB is proud that its focus on engagement, wellness, security and growth has resulted in being recognized as one of Manitoba's Top Employers for the eighth year in a row.

"We are committed to building a supportive workplace and remaining an employer of choice so that we can continue delivering valued services to Manitobans," Maharaj says. "We recognize the dedicated and talented staff we have and the importance of providing a workplace where they are able to succeed and thrive."

WCB does.

WCB
Workers Compensation
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security | wellness | engagement | growth | WCBdoes.com

Tell us your story

If you are an exceptional employer with progressive HR programs and initiatives, we invite you to submit an application for next year's edition of *Manitoba's Top Employers*.

For information, please visit:

CanadasTop100.com

Our 2020 application will be available in February through the national *Canada's Top 100 Employers* competition.

