



By Philip Carson

CHBA Human Resources
Committee

Maintaining Core Values As A Company Grows

A WELL-BUILT HOME depends on the dedication of the people behind the construction project. Family-run business is the heart of the home building and renovation industry, and the dedication and integrity of family members are key ingredients for early success and growth. As a builder grows with continuing success and builds a staff to help manage its projects, the challenge for the builder is to maintain the dedication that comes naturally within a family business. Effective human resources policies and programs are an important part of attracting and maintaining dedicated and skilled employees, and ensuring that they conduct themselves with integrity.

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Competitive compensation is the starting point for attracting and maintaining the best people. Many members of the Canadian Home Builders' Association participate in an annual compensation survey to ensure that they are paying their staff competitively.

Another key part of compensation are bonus programs that are tied to performance, with an emphasis on the performance measures that are important to customers, such as ensuring the timely delivery of a quality product. For instance, construction supervisors are often given bonuses for the timely and satisfactory completion of key construction steps on each house, such as completion of building inspections, timely completion of the house, and satisfactory

completion of a possession inspection by the homeowner. Customer service representatives are often rewarded upon completion of the any deficiencies that may be identified at the possession stage and with the one-year inspection under the Alberta Home Warranty Program. Companies may also recognize the collective success of the company with recognition events, which helps to reinforce a team approach.

Health and pension benefits are also an important part of attracting and retaining quality staff as a company grows. Many builders recognize that their employees have different needs depending on their family situation, and have found ways to offer flexible benefits

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programs that allow employees to tailor their benefits to suit their personal needs.

Human resources management in a successful company also requires a comprehensive set of policies to ensure a fair and safe work environment. Alberta legislation requires a number of policies. Meaningful occupational safety policies are crucial in the home building industry, and are required by law. Further, all employers must establish policies to protect the personal information of their employees and to address potential violence in the workplace.

Common human resources practice includes policies designed to ensure that all employees have a clear understanding of their obligations, including policies on the following topics:

- Code of conduct and workplace respect;
- Conflict of interest;
- Giving and receipt of promotional gratuities;
- Substance abuse;
- Internet use;
- Use of company vehicles; and
- Absenteeism, sick days and personal leave days.

Policies such as those listed above, when clearly explained and followed, help to promote a respectful environment where employees can expect to be treated fairly. While these policies may be found within a large professionally managed company, they are simply a reflection of the same core values of dedication and integrity that are so important to the success of a small family-run business.

Attracting and keeping quality employees requires time and effort on the part of the employer, but that effort pays off when employees feel like they are an important member of a team that shares and promotes a common set of values. Those values will show through in the way the company interacts with its customers and suppliers, and will be reflected in a company's reputation in the industry.

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