

## SKILL SOLUTIONS IN ACTION

In many cases, the solutions provided on the previous two pages have moved beyond the "idea" stage, and are now being used in workplaces around the province. Here are some examples of skill solutions in action.

### **Adjusting hours of work**

Port of Vancouver has ten permanent staff working in the harbour patrol area. As the Port moved to an expanded role and required 24-hour coverage of Port activity, staff in the area were allowed to determine their own shift scheduling. The employer's only stipulation was that shift arrangements comply with Employment Standards. This arrangement has been in place for five years. Giving staff control over their own scheduling has helped reduce turnover, absenteeism and injury rates.

### **Adjusting hours of work**

Bandstra Transportation system operates from three locations in the province. The company has truck drivers running typical long-haul shifts between the locations; but 4-5 years ago they changed scheduling, and now have drivers meet half-way, switch loads and return home. Drivers are doing fewer overnight runs, which has resulted in a 40-50 percent productivity increase, less wear and tear on the rigs, and reduced staff turnover.

### **Targets for hiring**

Howe Sound Pulp and Paper identified the need to bring in young apprentices in order to create successorships in many of their skilled trades areas. The company has increased its apprenticeships from 1 per year to 11 by negotiating revised criteria for hiring apprentices with the union.

### **Linkages with educational institutions**

Teck Cominco has developed a partnership with Simon Fraser University, Selkirk College and the University College of the Cariboo to develop an MBA program that can be delivered to anyone in the Trail area. Instructors from SFU come to Trail for three weekends over the three months, and the local colleges manage the student administration.

### **Partnerships**

Duke Energy and Slocan Forest Products, working with the three northern school districts, First Nations and Northern Lights College have created the Northeast B.C. Community Learning Council. Through this initiative, they have developed the concept of a regional campus -- streamlining training and expanding options for training in critical skill areas for local high school students.

### **Use of temporary/seasonal workers**

Mount Seymour has developed reciprocal agreements with a number of summer tourism operators in the area, in order to provide more year-round employment options for workers. Job postings and hiring are now done with an eye to the expanded set of employment duties.



### **Retention of workers in the heartlands**

Duke Energy identified a problem with employee retention as staff moved up through middle management. With headquarters located in Vancouver, it was difficult to attract senior-level staff back to Northeast B.C. In order to be a visible presence in the community, and to provide career growth options, the VP operations and senior HR personnel were relocated to Fort St. John. The company has since seen a reduction in turnover at all levels.

### **Developing a long-term HR plan across the sector**

In order to meet the challenge of expanding B.C. tourism, the sector developed a long-term human resource strategy that it unveiled in 2003. To meet the challenges identified in its plan, a new sector association -- called *go2* -- was created to provide HR support to businesses in the sector. Earlier in 2004, *go2* launched an online job posting tool to help employers find workers with the right skill sets.

### **Recruiting from new sources**

The Roofing Contractors Association of B.C. and SUCCESS (which provides services to immigrants) have developed a program which fast-tracks immigrants into roofing apprenticeships. This five-month preparatory program is equivalent to the first year of an apprenticeship. After completing the program apprentices are referred to professional roofing contractors to begin the second year of their apprenticeship.

### **Changing production practices**

Weyerhaeuser is working with First Nations groups to identify where there is capacity and interest by First Nations to take over logging operations as contractors.

### **Enhance linkages with schools**

Destinations and Tourism Vancouver work with the Vancouver School District to hold professional development days focused on tourism. This has helped raise awareness among teaching staff about the range of career paths in the tourism sector.

### **Recruiting from other countries**

When hiring for senior positions or specialized skills, Crystal Decisions often has to recruit from outside of Canada. In order to streamline the process, they have developed in-house immigration expertise, to help smooth the relocation process for prospective employees.

### **Enhance linkages with schools**

Air Canada worked with the Richmond School District and the local union to implement an Aviation Maintenance Orientation program at C.E. London Secondary School in Richmond. This is a three-year program that begins in high school. Air Canada provides the work experience component, and the union helps deliver the training.

### **Increasing recruitment from within the Aboriginal community**

With the support of the Aboriginal Employment Partnership Initiative (AEPI), the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) identified a gap in their recruitment and retention of Aboriginal people, and then took steps to improve their internal processes. The AEPI helped create new partnerships between the Aboriginal community and RBC - the results were stronger RBC initiatives, such as the Aboriginal Stay in School Program, and new programs such as Cross Cultural Training, which RBC delivers in all branches that will be hiring Aboriginal students.