

## A NEW VISION FOR PEOPLE

If customer service is VIA's key competitive advantage, the source of that advantage lies in the talent and commitment of employees — from the front-line attendants on board the trains, to the team leaders, to the mechanics who help keep trains running on schedule. All of the major objectives for VIA in the foreseeable future depend on harnessing the creativity and imagination of people.

The high level of commitment of our employees has helped make the Renaissance of passenger rail a success. Our Strategic Plan continues to make a focus on people a top priority — creating an environment which promotes a passionate commitment to VIA's business success. Efforts to communicate VIA's vision, values and strategic goals, and to keep employees informed about business challenges and performance, have been improved and will continue to improve. Recent organizational changes, such as the realignment of VIA's cross-functional teams, have helped create more opportunities for people to put their knowledge and skills into action on the job in order to better serve our customers.

### **A NEW FOCUS ON TALENT**

In 2004, we took our vision for people at VIA Rail a step further, launching the transformation of the Human Resources department from a largely administrative role to a far more strategic one — managing the talent of the Corporation. This is particularly important at a time when many of VIA's people — and hence our talent — will soon become eligible for retirement.

This transformation will be supported by the implementation of a new “e-HR” online tool that will make it possible to handle the administrative role more efficiently. For example, information about policies can be made directly available to employees online. Once the technology for handling this administrative function is in place, the task will be to make a new kind of service available — helping employees gain more control in developing meaningful careers at VIA, and making a real contribution to the future of passenger rail.

Our objective is to help employees and managers build better, stronger bridges between individual talents and career aspirations, and the strategic goals of the Corporation. When the transformation of Human Resources is complete, everyone

at VIA will have direct access to information about VIA's current business priorities and future objectives. A broad range of new tools, procedures and support will help people look at their talents and career goals and find ways to match these to their personal objectives as well as to the needs of the Corporation three, five, or ten years down the road. They can then map out their own career, with a personal portfolio of options for training, growth and development at VIA Rail.

Managers began training in 2004 in the use of new tools for setting individual and team objectives, with clear links between short-term operational objectives and the longer-term strategic goals of the Corporation. Human Resources is helping managers integrate objective-setting with employee training, learning and development plans, evaluations, and performance management. New e-learning tools will also expand the range of development opportunities for our people, with training tied directly to performance objectives and VIA's strategic goals.

A comprehensive review of compensation, pension and benefits, as well as the service recognition program in 2004, examined how rewards for employees can be better linked to VIA's corporate strategy — supporting efforts that drive the success of VIA Rail more effectively.

Hiring and succession planning is also taking on a more strategic focus. Human Resources has identified key positions, the core talents needed to fill those positions, and the training people need to move into those positions at the right time. Hiring new talent will focus not only on filling specific job openings, but on recruiting the kind of people VIA needs in the long-term — the kind of people who will help VIA succeed down the road.

The transformation of Human Resources is a long-term project that will unfold over several years. Our vision for people at the heart of this transformation — a vision where every individual can align their creativity, intelligence and innovation with meaningful work and the future of passenger rail — will become an integral part of strategic planning in the years ahead.