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It's Time to Get Serious about HR

Benefits to Employers of Hiring Foreign Talent



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It will come as no surprise ABSDA currently has over 550 active Member Retail Building Supply and Associate Supplier Members.

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The Top 10 Benefits

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The ABSDA Building Supply News is the official magazine of the Atlantic Building Supply Dealers Association and is published in February, May, July, September and December. The Atlantic Building Supply News is distributed to all ABSDA Dealer and Associate Members.

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My time's up!



My second term as chairman of the board of directors is almost up and this will be my last article.

It's time to pass the torch to **Steve Foran** who will be stepping into the chairman's role in June at the Annual General Meeting.

Luckily for me I get to stay on the Board as past chair for a little while longer. I enjoy serving on the board and representing the interests of our Members.

We'll be seeking new directors and I would certainly encourage anyone to get involved and give their time to our industry.

There will be many changes and challenges that will face our Industry in the coming years. ABSDA has an opportunity to play a strong supporting role in helping our members adapt to the changes.

Perhaps the biggest challenge our Industry faces is a workforce shortage.

The Association undertook an HR study most recently and it showed that more than 30% of our labour force was over 55 years old as of the 2016 Census data. Since we're currently in 2022, that average age median is now 7 years older.

Our report also shows challenges with higher than average turnover rates.

The report shows that our labour needs have increased. All provinces except for Newfoundland have increased their staffing requirements since 2016.

However, the report does show signs that Atlantic Canada is lagging the rest of the country in the area of productivity. This might be pointing to other issues such as poor onboarding and training programs in our retail locations and/or lack of mentoring and product knowledge.

These are just the tip of the iceberg for challenges that our Industry will be facing in the coming years. So as you can see, there is much work to be done.

We have strong leadership at the Association level and with the right group around the boardroom table together I'm confident that we can take on whatever challenges come our way.

I would like to thank the staff at ABSDA along with my fellow Board members for their support over the past two years and I look forward to sticking around and serving my term as past chair.

Wishing you all a great summer season and hope to see you at the ABSDA golf tournament on July 7.

Best wishes, **Guy Legresley**Chair







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Let me say it again – "It's time to get serious about HR"



Back in February I wrote an article called "It's time to get serious about HR" and I'm here today doubling down on that same line. Our employees are the most valuable asset in our companies and everything about our labour force trends is telling us that finding people is going to become increasingly more difficult.

As mentioned in my last article ABSDA has undertaken a massive workforce strategy study. Thank you very much to the members that filled out the two surveys that we circulated. We received strong participation which in return has given us an excellent sample size and understanding of what is happening in our Industry.

Shortly we will make the full report available to our members however, for today I will give you a very short summary of some of our findings in certain categories.

Communications: Only 50% of our Members have a suggestion system to identify areas of improvement. An employee suggestion program where employees can submit helpful ideas for new products or identify areas of improvement in the workplace can be extremely beneficial.

Compensation observations: Many members do not offer a formalized Employee Assistance Program. It is important to ensure that employees feel supported and have an outlet for mental health purposes.

Employee Engagement Observations: Most members do not have a mentoring program in place. This is an area of importance that can benefit both employees and the organization. Employee engagement surveys are an effective tool to understand the strengths and areas of concern in your organization.

Workforce Planning Observations: Finding talent is a HUGE concern for owners. Most members do not have a succession plan in place for key positions within the business.

Recruitment Tools: Members lack recruitment tools and expertise to help them be successful in recruiting top talent. Members want to learn more about Immigration Programs and how they can leverage them.

Employee Orientation Observations: Member need help and support in developing best practice orientation programs. This includes checklists, tools, resources for properly onboarding new staff members.

Training & Development Observations:

Members expressed that very little attention and structure exists within the training and development area. High turnover makes it difficult to keep staff adequately trained.

These are only but of a few of the observations stemming from our surveys and report. Rest assured that a great deal of work needs to be done to advance our HR skills.

ABSDA is committed to working with our Members to make improvements in this space.

Denis Melanson President

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Port of Saint John an Atlantic Canada Asset

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We connect to 500 ports around the world. Our container operations have grown by 52% in the past five years, making us the second fastest growing port on the East Coast of North America. In a year of congested ports and supply chain disruptions, Port Saint John remains fluid and uncongested.

Port Saint John has three container lines with weekly calls, MSC, CMA CGM and Hapag-Lloyd.

MSC is the largest container line in the world and connects Saint John to global markets.

CMA CGM, the third largest shipping line in the world, also offers imports and exports through the port with primary routing to the Caribbean and Central/South America.

Hapag-Lloyd which is currently the fifth largest shipping line, offers imports through the port with their primary routing being Trans-Atlantic Mediterranean.

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solutions for every shipping need from origin to destination. They have a 70-acre terminal and 3 large on-dock warehouses which are available for distribution, stuffing and destuffing of containers, storage and inventory management. The terminal is directly adjacent to our major highway system and has on-site rail connections.

The container terminal is currently undergoing a \$205 M upgrade which will allow for larger vessels

and increased yard capacity. This project also increases visibility and traceability of containers for shippers and receivers. It will be complete in early 2023.

Port Saint John's Container Development Specialist, Peter Shaw, is

actively working to meet with importers and exporters to assist with your supply chain needs. If you would like to contact him for a more in-depth discussion, send an email to pshaw@sjport.com. We look forward to hearing from you!





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Phrases that PAY

By Jeff Mowatt. Jeff is a customer service strategist, Hall of Fame speaker, and bestselling author. For more tips, training tools or to inquire about engaging Jeff for your team visit www.JeffMowatt.com

Simple Statements that Increase your Perceived Value

Quick — name two words which, when frequently used by waiters and waitresses, increases tips by 12%. (Hint: it's not please or thank you).

Give up? The answer is, 'for you.' So, rather than saying to a customer, "Would you like some more coffee?", the savvy waiter would say, "I brought more coffee over for you." The patron thinks, "Gosh, you did that for me, how thoughtful!" and tips accordingly — on average 12% more. That's what I call easy money. If you answered correctly — ignore the rest of this article. If on the other hand you'd like more phrases and tips that increase your perceived value, then read on.

It's OK to be in a bad mood.

I don't buy-in to the conventional 'wisdom' that an employee must bubble with enthusiasm to provide great service and high value. In the real world of upset customers, long hours, and stress, an employee's enthusiasm will occasionally wear thin. We all have bad days. So, front line employees need to be trained on how to convey a positive, helpful attitude even when they're not having a zippity-do-dah day. Here are several situations along with phrases that convey a powerful positive impression — no matter how stressed you may be.

A customer asks for something and you don't know if it's in stock.

- Without training: "I don't know if they're in. I'll have to check."
- With training: "I don't know if they're in, but I'll be happy to check for you."

The trained employee conveys a better attitude. The irony is that she didn't work any harder than the untrained worker — they both checked inventory. But the trained employee gets a lot more credit because she used better phrasing. What's more — she didn't have to feel happy or enthusiastic to get the extra credit. She just used wording that made a better impression.

A boss, co-worker or customers asks you to do something.

- Without training: (any of the following): "OK, I'll try, I'll do my best, uh-huh, sure."
- With training: "I'll take care of it."

"OK" or "sure" are adequate responses. But who wants to be perceived as 'adequate'? On the other hand, imagine asking someone to do a series of difficult, inconvenient, unpleasant tasks, and they

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Phrases That PAY

Continued from page 10

respond instead with, "I'll take care it." That conveys the impression of a positive, confident, caring person. Again, we don't have to actually feel excited or want to do the task, but using the right phrasing creates that perception.

A customer asks about a delivery date.

• Without training: "We might be able to get it to you by Wednesday."

• *With training:* "We'll deliver it by Friday."

The guideline is, underpromise and overdeliver. In this situation, if the delivery is made on Thursday, the untrained employee looks incompetent while the trained person looks like a hero. Keep in mind that it's not just your organization's reputation that's at stake — it's also your personal reputation. So make promises

sparingly, and then keep them — no matter what it costs you.

You're addressing a customer.

- *Without training:* Says, "sir, miss, or ma'am" frequently.
- With training: avoids using sir or ma'me and instead uses person's name.

While you can never be too polite with a customer, you can be too formal. When I ask participants at my seminars how they feel when a front line employee addresses them as "sir" or "ma'am" the overwhelming response is, 'old'. Not a good feeling. What's more, it creates a barrier between the customer and employee. The customer may be starting to think of the employee as a equal – which we want. But the moment the employee uses "sir" or "ma'am" the customer begins to think of the employees as being at a lower status. Of course there are exceptions where you may choose to be more formal; such as when you're dealing with certain senior citizens or someone from a conservative cultural background (anyone from England).



- Without training: (Prefaces the statement with any of these phrases): "The truth is... believe me... honest... true story... I really mean this..."
- *With training:* Omits all these statements and just makes the statement of fact.

Prefacing a statement with a phrase that essentially says we're about to tell the truth, implies that everything we've said up till that point has been a lie! These statements hurt rather than help our credibility. So trained employees just don't use them — especially when having a sales conversation.

The competitive edge.

Having a technological advantage over the competition is almost impossible to sustain in today's marketplace. Customers can almost always get a similar product to yours somewhere else. The easiest way to differentiate you and your organization is by providing value added service. That doesn't mean everyone has to work harder. It does mean you need to speak the language of professionals. That's when using the right phrase really pays.







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The Top 10 Benefits to Employers of Hiring Foreign Talent

Source: www.immigration.ca

The bottom line for any employer with a responsibility to his or her stockholders has to be the bottom line – and immigrants can boost that and make the company run more smoothly in a myriad of ways.



As the United States has tightened immigration and become less welcoming, Canada has made shrewd policy moves to attract top global talent and capital.

Canada now has six times as many skilled immigrants, as a percentage of the population, as our American neighbours do.

But why is it such a smart move for a Canadian business to seek out and hire talent from an international pool of candidates rather than just post a job ad in Canada and hire locally?

Here are The Top 10 Benefits to Employers of Hiring Foreign Talent

1. New Talent, New Skills

Foreign workers selected for their education and experience in particular fields and brought to Canada either as temporary foreign workers or permanent residents under the economic class of programs can ensure an employer gets an employee able to do the job and boost the company's productivity.

2. Breadth of Experience

Growing up and living in other countries, often with a completely different culture, gives immigrants to Canada a unique perspective that can enrich the company's decision-making processes. It can be something as simple as understanding how to approach prospective clients of a different culture or knowing how

systems are integrated in other business environments. That experience can mean the difference between a ho-hum decision or process and one that sizzles and stands out compared to the competition.

3. Proven Ability to Adapt

In today's ever-changing business environment, the ability to adapt to sudden and unforeseen events can mean the difference between survival and failure. Immigrants come with a proven ability to adapt. They've left their homes and countries, friends and extended families and settled in Canada with its different culture and languages – and succeeded. That ability to adapt to new circumstances improves the resilience of any company that brings these kinds of employees onboard.

4. Improved Access to International Markets

Immigrants often speak other languages and are familiar with the culture and traditions of the countries where they were born and raised. That can be an invaluable asset for a company planning to expand into those markets because these newcomers can give a company the inside track on what will work – and what won't – in those other markets.

5. Stronger Connection with Canadian Customers

Canada is a nation of immigrants, with as many as one in five Canadians identifying as an immigrant. In bigger cities like Toronto, as many as half of residents are people born outside the country. When a company employs immigrants to serve those customers, those employees are often better able to understand and connect with immigrant customers because they share the experience of having immigrated to Canada.

6. Strong Work Ethic

Immigrants come to Canada because they recognize that this is an amazing opportunity – and so they are loath to waste it. Newcomers to Canada recognize they need work experience to stay in the country and they make their jobs a top priority. They want to prove themselves and showcase their skills.

7. Enhanced Corporate Image

Respect for diversity and inclusion is a strong Canadian value and those employers who hire immigrants and are seen as inclusive benefit from a more favourable corporate reputation.

8. Improved Employee Morale

Job seekers gravitate towards companies with diverse workforces because this signals to them that the company is singularly free of discrimination. That attitude of openness and acceptance boosts employee morale.

9. Boost to Productivity

A University of Florida study shows that having a more diverse workforce boosts productivity and offers other competitive advantages.

10. Ease of Training in Company-Specific Processes

When immigrants arrive in Canada, they are well aware that they have a lot to learn about their new home and how companies operate. That awareness makes these newcomers particularly willing to listen, learn and share and makes them ideal employees when it comes to training in company-specific processes and procedures.

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Industry News

CANADIAN POPULATION GROWS 5.2% SINCE 2016

The Canadian Population has grown 5.2% since the 2016 Census and the good news is most Atlantic Canadian Provinces are getting their share of new immigrants. Congratulations to PEI for outpacing the national average!

In 2021, Canada was home to 36,991,981 individuals. That's 1.8 million (+5.2%) more than in 2016!



NAMAKOR HOLDINGS ACQUIRES DUCHESNE LTD TO ACCELERATE THE **COMPANY'S GROWTH**

NAMAKOR HOLDINGS is pleased to announce the acquisition of DUCHESNE LTD and the injection of the human and financial resources required to accelerate the company's current sound growth.

With a booming construction materials market in North America, we believe Duchesne has the worldclass infrastructure required to successfully turbo-charge growth. Through our strategic partnership, industry network and financial resources, the Company is on a path to accelerate organic growth and expand into new geographic markets - says Mr. Abhinav (Abhi) Capoor, Vice President of Investments, Namakor Holdings.





PRESIDENT OF REGAL IDEAS RETIRES

With 20+ years of outstanding service and dedication to Regal ideas Inc. Ernie Couillard, President, has retired from the company. Ernie's dedication, integrity, knowledge, and positive energy not only



helped grow the Regal brand but raised the standards of the industry as a whole. Ernie's business acumen will be missed as much as the endearing friendships he developed in his 20 years within the industry and Regal ideas. We are excited for Ernie's next chapter as he spends more time with family and friends on both sides of the border.

Andrew Pantelides. Vice President of Marketing and Business Development, will be taking over responsibilities from Ernie Couillard, including Sales and Strategy for the company.

> **ABSDA** ANNUAL GENERAL **MEETING** – **JUNE 29, 2022**



ABSDA will hold it's Annual General Meeting on Wednesday June 29. This meeting will be held via Zoom at 10am Atlantic Time.

If you wish to participate, please contact the office at 506-858-0700 and we will send you the Zoom link so you can attend.

Industry News

GILLFOR DISTRIBUTION ANNOUNCES THE PURCHASE OF AFA FOREST **PRODUCTS**



GILLFOR DISTRIBUTION INC., parent company to OWL Distribution, McIlveen Lumber Industries, Brunswick Valley Distribution and Brown & Rutherford Co., is excited to announce the purchase of AFA FOREST PRODUCTS INC.

AFA is a leading and long-standing distributor for building products in Canada and is headquartered in Bolton, ON. AFA owns and operates 13 distribution facilities that service the entire Canadian retail, wholesale and industrial landscape for both commodity lumber and specialty products.

Gillfor and AFA will continue to operate in parallel until a full operational assessment is completed and a seamless integration can be executed. A detailed plan and contact list will be shared with all stakeholders for the pending integration in due course.

IDEAL ROOFING BREAKS GROUND ON NEW MANUFACTURING PLANT



IDEAL ROOFING has broken ground on their 80 000 sq ft manufacturing plant in Moncton NB.

This new facility sits on 13 acres of land and will create 20 new jobs during the first phase and will then scale to 50 new positions.

Congratulations to Ideal Roofing on their expansion into Atlantic Canada!

HICKEY'S TIMBER MART OPENS NEW LOCATION



Congratulations to the **Hickey family** on their addition of a new location in Gould's Newfoundland.

ABSDA LANDS CORPORATE RATE AT THE NEW HYATT MONCTON

If you're traveling into Moncton for business or for pleasure, you can enjoy a great corporate rate at the new Downtown Hyatt hotel. ABSDA Member Corporate rates as low as \$119 are available and it includes complimentary breakfast. A rate of \$139 is offered in peak months of July & August.



HAPPY 60TH BIRTHDAY TO CONNIE!

Happy 60th birthday to our very own Connie! She's been proudly serving our Members for 22 years!



She's a little depressed about turning 60 but I told her "turning 60 is a privilege denied to many so embrace it"!

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