

Five best places to work in Northern Ontario

RDH Mining Equipment

Industry leader
grooms talent
from within

NADINE ROBINSON
For Northern Ontario Business

As Tasha Kingsley drove into work, she noticed the 10 international flags representing major customers at RDH Mining Equipment (RDH) were barely fluttering. She knew it was going to be another scorcher of a day in Alban. In their newly expanded 15,000-square-foot facility, Kingsley would be cool in the air-conditioned office, but it would be a different story for shop workers.

Thankfully for those designing and fabricating the mining and underground mobile tunnelling equipment on site, 60 kilometres south of Sudbury at French River, the owner would soon arrive with frozen treats for everyone.

"Four employees bought RDH from the previous owner, so they know what it's like to work those hot summer days," said Kingsley. "The owners truly care about employees and want to do what they can to make them comfortable."

In 2013, RDH made the list in the Annual PROFIT 500 Ranking of Canada's Fastest-Growing Companies (by PROFIT Magazine). Established in 1984 with three employees, RDH has now grown to 56 employees.

Popsicles aren't the only advantage to working at RDH; fish fries are also common.

"We're a pretty social group," said Kingsley, executive assistant to the COO. "Partially out of necessity, since we are quite isolated, but we're now a big goofy family, and the company likes to



Enjoying frozen treats supplied by RDH on a hot day are (from left) Darryl Lafond, welder; Gerry Boucher, shop manager; Dave O'Donnell, mechanic apprentice; Muhammad Siddiqui, of the engineering department; and Pavel Biba, of the engineering department.

“Suppliers and customers notice our family dynamic right away. Not to mention that we have a high level of respect for each other.”

Tasha Kingsley
executive assistant,
RDH Mining Equipment

celebrate accomplishments like the completion of a major order."

Since RDH became an industry leader by creating the first fully independent battery-operated underground mining equipment in 2012, there have been a lot more fish fries.

"Being an innovative industry leader is a source of pride for our employees," said Kingsley.

RDH believes in nurturing the close-knit atmosphere, with activities like golf tournaments, where employees, owners, and key suppliers all vie for prizes, a

trophy, and bragging rights.

"There's always a lot of joking, laughing, and fist-bumping... And of course we round out the day with a chicken and fish fry," said Kingsley.

She states that the turnover is low and that RDH is a great source of employment for people from the community.

"Many employees are drawn to us for our reputation and competitive wages and benefits, but they stay because of the variety and complexity of the work," said Kingsley. "We also nurture staff

who show the passion and fire to get full licences to become electricians and mechanics. We also pay for them to get their common core training, even though the underground safety course is not mandatory. We like to cultivate the employees we have here."

It is also not uncommon for workers to change roles depending on the project.

"We have clients around the world, and a diverse staff as well, so someone who is normally a

See Diverse on 18 ►

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From p.15

Diverse work and opportunities retain employees

mechanic might pitch in to provide translation services for an instruction manual," said Kingsley. "Employees love the diversity of work."

Employees with language skills have the opportunity to travel with the equipment and to ensure that it is properly commissioned and training is of high quality.

On the flipside, in Alban, employees help show off the Canadian lifestyle to international customers on their 36-acre lot. "We have a house on-site to host customers, not to mention a sugar shack on our property," said Kingsley. "Recently, we showed international customers how to make maple syrup."

Employees and owners at RDH are from Russia, Chile, China, Pakistan, the United States, and Canada, among others.

"Suppliers and customers notice our family dynamic right away," said Kingsley. "Not to mention that we have a high level of respect for each other. It is a diverse, positive, and respectful work environment."

“Being an innovative industry leader is a source of pride for our employees.”

Tasha Kingsley

executive assistant, RDH Mining Equipment

RDH allows for flex-time, and will shut down early on Fridays when things are slow to let employees enjoy their surroundings.

"The quality of life here is amazing," said Kingsley. "It's really no surprise that most of our employees come to us through word of mouth; people want to work here."

RDH also contributes to the food bank, Easter Seals, was a major contributor to the children's splash pad, and takes part in the Christmas parade in French River every year.

From p.16

Hotel becoming a premier destination

ment team," Nadeau said. Working closely with staff — especially the younger staff — helps direct them and shows them that they are an important part of the whole team.

Nadeau said that part of what guides his approach to management is creating the positive work atmosphere he'd like to see for his own kids. "I want my children to work somewhere where they're appreciated."

"Overtraining" is important as well. Each employee learns more than just the basic components of their job description.

Structured training includes WHMIS, food handlers' certification, workplace health and safety training, and a full set of management skills courses, all of which

are offered in-house.

"It builds consistency for us, consistency for our customers, and it shows an employee that the company is interested in them and investing in them," Nadeau said.

High turnover rates are a reality in hospitality. But it's also true that companies in the industry tend to promote from within.

That's the case with around 60 per cent of Genesis Hospitality's management company-wide, Nadeau said.

In fact, the current company president started at one of the hotels as a dishwasher.

"It's a tough industry. If kids are showing an interest into it, there's value in investing in that."

The Victoria Inn is living proof of that.



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