

the employer CHALLENGE

A Human Resources Newsletter from Employer to Employer



Quality of Life
CHALLENGE

Issue 85 | November 2009

Getting on Board with Customer Service Training

The attitude may be laid back at Sitka Surf and Skate Shop, but when it comes to good customer service, training is nothing less than essential, says manager Laurens Besier. "It's a no-brainer. You can't help out a customer without good skills," he says.

That's why he jumped on board when presented with the opportunity to participate at no cost in SkillsPlus. The project aims to address employees' Essential Skills in nine areas including reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, problem solving, working with others, thinking skills, computer use and continuous learning.

Besier says his staff is keen to get started with the training, which will be delivered by the Victoria READ Society's workplace educator Helen Thomas right in the store during staff's regular shifts.

"Nothing but good can come of it," says Sitka employee Tyler Mcleod. "It's a great opportunity and I love that we do the training right here."

Thomas, who has been an adult educator for more than 20 years, will focus on improving Sitka's customer service skills by specifically training the Essential Skills of oral communication, working with others, thinking skills and continuous learning. She started by conducting in-depth interviews with management and employees to determine the business's training needs.

"We can provide customized, flexible training that looks at ways to address specific skills that will make a difference in the business's day-to-day operations," Thomas says.



Sitka Surf and Board store employee Kendal Benesh (L) and manager Laurens Besier (R) check out their product line.



Employer Quote

"We are always looking for ways to improve our business and we are excited to see how (SkillsPlus) training helps us out."

*Laurens Besier, Manager,
Sitka Surf and Skate Shop*



Sponsorship opportunity

This e-newsletter sponsored by:

dot+canuck
www.dotcanuck.com

Imagine your logo here.

Contact info@golchallenge.ca or
250-383-6166 for details on
becoming a sponsor.



For Employers

[Workplace Training for
Innovation Pilot Program](#)

Designed to provide eligible
employers with funding for employee
training

[HR Toolkit](#)

for the non-profit and
voluntary sector

READ Society's research on
workplace learning is available:
[Bridging Employer and Employee
Needs in BC's Capital Region: Phase
I Report & Literature Review and
Bibliography](#)

[Ten Ways to Keep
and Attract Your Staff](#)

A booklet from the Labour Market
Dialogues documenting the
successful hiring and retention
strategies of 10 employers of choice
in BC's Capital Region.

For more **HR options** and local
business examples, read the
[HR Options for Action booklet.](#)



Stay Connected

Local and international research shows that addressing Essential Skills in the workforce helps both businesses and employees. Training helps manage change, retain promising employees, and improve productivity and safety.

SkillsPlus training is offered by the Victoria READ Society and the Community Council, with funding through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement for small business in the Capital Region with less than 50 employees. Currently seven businesses in the retail/wholesale/grocery and tourism/hospitality sectors have signed up and others are on a waitlist.

Employers can find more workplace learning tips, tools and resources on READ's website at www.readsociety.bc.ca/workplace.htm and through the Community Council, <http://www.qolchallenge.ca/resources/skillsplus.php>.

CHALLENGE e-news flash
a bi monthly email newsletter used to share information and links on research, reports and events related to reducing poverty. [Click here](#) to subscribe. Promote your own poverty reduction events and research. Send details to Christina.



Contact us

Learn more about the [Quality of Life CHALLENGE](#)

info@qolchallenge.ca
250-383-6166



The Affordability Index, calculated and released each year by the Community Council's Quality of Life CHALLENGE, reflects the real costs of living through the hourly wage required to enjoy a modest quality of life in our region. Our region's affordability, especially the high costs of housing, childcare, and transportation, affects our ability to attract and retain staff and sustain a healthy and vibrant economy and community.

In 2009, the wage required to maintain a modest quality of life in BC's Capital Region is calculated at \$17.02 per hour, a 3.8% increase from 2008. This calculation assumes two adults working 35 per week each while providing a home for two children.

To subscribe to this e-newsletter, click the link below.

