

## OPPORTUNITIES 2000

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**Through Opportunities 2000, we envision the people of Waterloo Region working together to create opportunities, promote awareness and take action to reduce the region's poverty rate to the lowest in Canada. By enriching the lives of individuals and families within our own community, we can set an example for all Canadians.**

Researched and Written  
by Christine Weinert

This booklet illustrates a sampling of Human Resources Practice, the success of those practices within the businesses of Waterloo Region and their effect on the reduction of poverty.

*THE GOAL OF THIS WORK IS TO INFORM AND TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS AROUND THE ISSUE OF POVERTY, TO IDENTIFY THE BARRIERS THAT MIGHT EXIST IN THE WORKPLACE TODAY AND TO SUGGEST SOME POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.*

Waterloo Region has a diverse and strong economy, yet poverty continues to climb in our community. Statistics Canada figures released in May 1999 showed that 14.6% of the population in the Kitchener census district (approx. 55,000 people) live below the poverty line. That's an increase of 28% over the past five years.

Opportunities 2000 is doing something about it.

Sponsored by Lutherwood Community Opportunities Development Association (LutherwoodCODA), Opportunities 2000 (OP2000) is a regional partnership of businesses, organizations, governments and individuals, working together to reduce poverty in Waterloo Region.

"By the year 2001, if nothing else happens in the meantime, we will have 16,200 families living in poverty. That's an epidemic," said Paul Born, Consulting Director of Opportunities 2000. "To reach the goal of reducing poverty to the lowest level in Canada, we must not only remove these families from poverty; we must take action to prevent others from becoming impoverished."

Opportunities 2000 is working toward that goal by developing projects and researching policies that help local families escape the poverty cycle. Already over 1800 families are actively involved in the project, which aims to affect 2000 families by end of the year 2000.

Canada has traditionally used income supplements and social services to alleviate the effects of poverty. However, its root causes often go unchecked, such as: high unemployment and low wages resulting from a lack of education, decreasing opportunities, low self-esteem, and employment barriers. Opportunities 2000 is designed to help people living in low-income neighbourhoods generate their own economic opportunities as a way of escaping the dependency cycle.

Although Statistics Canada does not promote the use of its Low Income Cut-offs (LICOs) as an official poverty line, the LICOs are the most recognized and frequently used measure of poverty in Canada. In Canada, 53% of poor are working poor - in Waterloo Region, that number is 49%. Poverty, however, is not just a statistic. It is as real and varied as the individual faces of the poor in this community. Poverty is more than a lack of income - it is a lack of opportunity, assets, support, and (often) hope.

**Opportunities 2000 is funded entirely by the private sector, with a commitment to develop viable solutions to reduce poverty in Waterloo Region.**

**Achieving the lowest poverty rate in Canada can be accomplished with involvement and support from business and members of our community.**

**IF** every business committed to mentoring or training two people who are now on social assistance...there would be no poor

**IF** every business committed to turning (the equivalent of) one part-time job into a full-time job...there would be no poor

**IF** every business committed to having just one person who has never had a full-time job...there would be no poor

## STATISTICS CANADA'S LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS

(annual income)

(1992 BASE) FOR 1998

### Size of community

Family Size (# of people)	500,000+	100,000 to 499,999	30,000 to 99,999	less than 30,000	rural
<b>1</b>	\$17,571	\$15,070	\$14,965	\$13,924	\$12,142
<b>2</b>	\$21,962	\$18,837	\$18,706	\$17,405	\$15,178
<b>3</b>	\$27,315	\$23,429	\$23,264	\$21,647	\$18,877
<b>4</b>	\$33,063	\$28,359	\$28,162	\$26,205	\$22,849
<b>5</b>	\$36,958	\$31,701	\$31,481	\$29,293	\$25,542
<b>6</b>	\$40,855	\$35,043	\$34,798	\$32,379	\$28,235
<b>7+</b>	\$44,751	\$38,385	\$38,117	\$35,467	\$30,928

**Opportunities 2000** will have lasting implications in Waterloo Region by showing the community what can be done in response to global conditions that have made poverty such a persistent reality in even the most advanced economies. When the program concludes in 2001, the lessons learned from this initiative will be incorporated into Lutherwood CODA operations, and will provide a wealth of expertise and experience upon which our community partners can build in the future. *Ultimately, it is Lutherwood CODA's belief that Opportunities 2000 will help Waterloo Region to achieve the lowest poverty rate in Canada.*

"A company's business is tightly linked to the economic and social conditions of the community in which it operates and grows. As full fledged citizens of society, corporations must accept community responsibilities and play a role in strengthening the underpinning of community vitality." John Cleghorn, Chairman and CEO, ROYAL BANK OF CANADA ([www.royalbank.com/donations](http://www.royalbank.com/donations))

## Leadership Roundtable

<b>Pat Henderson</b>	.....Co-Chair Pat Henderson & Associates
<b>Joseph Allen</b>	.....Co-Chair KPMG
<b>Paul Born</b>	.....Opportunities 2000
<b>Rick Brock</b>	.....S-S Technologies Inc.
<b>Rick Chaplin</b>	.....Canadian General-Tower Limited
<b>Sue Connors</b>	.....Smithson School Council
<b>Ed Dubas</b>	.....Ministry of Community & Social Services
<b>Jim Gordon</b>	.....Royal Bank of Canada
<b>Wayne Hussey</b>	.....Wayne Hussey Consulting Inc.
<b>Bob Irwin</b>	.....Human Resources Development Canada
<b>Rev. Dr. Dieter Kays</b>	.....Lutherwood CODA
<b>Arli Klassen</b>	.....Mennonite Central Committee
<b>Sally Lerner</b>	.....University of Waterloo
<b>Eric Leviten</b>	.....Caledon Institute
<b>Rose Mailloux</b>	.....K-W Chamber of Commerce
<b>Ann Van Norman</b>	.....Conestoga-Rovers & Associates
<b>Charles Pascal</b>	.....The Atkinson Charitable Foundation
<b>Frank Pizutto</b>	.....Region of Waterloo
<b>Bill Pyatt</b>	.....Social Services, Region of Waterloo
<b>Ken Seiling</b>	.....Regional Chair
<b>Pat Singleton</b>	.....Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank
<b>Sean Strickland</b>	.....Food Bank of Waterloo Region
<b>Karen Wilkinson</b>	.....United Way of Cambridge & North Dumfries

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## HR Booklet Steering Committee

<b>Joseph Allen</b>	.....KPMG
<b>Gerry Davis</b>	.....Royal Bank of Canada
<b>Maureen Nummelin</b>	.....Conestoga College
<b>Eileen Polson</b>	.....Lutherwood CODA and GVHRPA President
<b>Wes Worsfold</b>	.....The Eastbridge Group

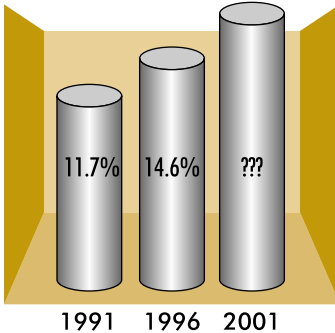
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## Review Panel

*The following people generously contributed their time to review and comment on the draft of this publication. Their assistance is greatly appreciated.*

<b>Mike Balog</b>	.....Budd Canada
<b>Rick Chaplin</b>	.....Canadian General-Tower Limited
<b>Gordon Gilmour</b>	.....Retired, Budd Canada
<b>Cheryl Lowe</b>	.....Region of Waterloo
<b>Bill MacGregor</b>	.....Gowling, Strathy & Henderson
<b>John Mazurek</b>	.....TMMC
<b>Wayne McKay</b>	.....C.A.W. Canada, Area Director
<b>Rosemary Pell</b>	.....PPSI Inc.
<b>Norma Tombari</b>	.....Royal Bank of Canada
<b>Keith Worley</b>	.....U.S.W.A. Vice President

## Poverty on the rise in Waterloo Region



## BEING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE

### What it means to your business!

1. decreased poverty rate  
slower pressure on  
municipal taxes
2. decreased municipal  
welfare burden
3. decreased crime rates  
and social unrest
4. enhanced business  
reputation
5. improved ability to  
attract and retain  
employees
6. increased pool of  
untapped labour
7. enhanced quality of life

## BUILDING THE BOTTOM LINE - THE BUSINESS CASE FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

Social Responsibility is the act of making decisions with an awareness of the ethical values of your company, the standards set forth by government, and a general respect for the people of the community in which you operate. Waterloo Region needs socially responsible companies to lead the way in the fight against poverty. But social responsibility is more than just recognition of the problem - it means taking action and providing the leadership to facilitate change. Little steps lead to big gains - for you, for your business, and for this community as a whole.

*Waterloo Region has one of the strongest economies in Canada, with an average family income of \$60,000. However, the level of poverty within this affluent community has increased 28% over the last five years. A staggering 14.6% of the region's population lives below the poverty line.*

Business demands sometimes force us to overlook the needs of our own community in favour of the needs of the marketplace. But recognizing and addressing issues that negatively affect the prosperity of the communities in which we operate is vital to a strategically sound business plan. Studies by the organization, Business for Social Responsibility ([www.bsr.org](http://www.bsr.org)), have proven the positive correlation between socially responsible initiatives and business success. When managed effectively, corporate contributions to the community can add to shareholder value by enhancing the company's reputation, facilitating increased and diverse skills for employees, and strengthening the health of communities through business relationships. Your business success may depend on the relationships you form within your community, and that success may benefit you and the entire region.



*That makes good business sense!*

Business cares; this we know. In receiving the 1996 Canadian Business Award, Ted Newell of NOVA Corporation said, "Canadian business leaders should be consciously striving to create the highest possible quality of life for the greatest number of people in this country. We business leaders will have failed in meeting our responsibility to Canadian society if we do not help Canada cope with poverty and its associated roots and ills."

## TOP 10 HIDDEN BARRIERS AFFECTING THE POOR

- 1. CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS**  
shift-work arrangements, cost, and availability
- 2. TRANSPORTATION COSTS**  
inadequate public transit access, prohibitive transport expenses
- 3. LANGUAGE SKILLS**  
New Canadians still learning the language
- 4. INITIAL WORK RELATED COSTS**  
cost of work clothes, transportation, safety equipment
- 5. ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS**  
societal perceptions of poverty
- 6. TRAINING COSTS**  
retraining, upgrading
- 7. SKILLS ACCREDITATION**  
unnecessary or unrecognized credentials as minimum requirement
- 8. DISABILITIES**  
inaccessibility of workplace
- 9. LOW-SELF ESTEEM**
- 10. HEALTH-RELATED COSTS**  
special requirements for health problems

## WALK A MILE IN MY SHOES PERSPECTIVES FROM THE WORKING POOR

The challenges faced by people living in poverty in today's society surpass the normal challenges faced by the average person. These challenges may be things that employed people take for granted. How to cope with child or eldercare issues; how to get to work when the transit system is inadequate but a car is out of the question; juggling the responsibilities in a single-parent household; or preparing for an interview when a new suit, bus fare or a hair cut is unaffordable?

These are real issues for many people within our community everyday. People in low-income situations or those living in poverty often find themselves having to struggle not only with the challenges of the job market but also with the demands of our society. There are 'norms' and expectations within our work world today that create unspoken barriers and force both employers and potential employees to make choices that may not benefit the individuals or the communities in which they live.

*The following stories illustrate the struggles and subsequent successes that people have experienced, overcoming the barriers within our community. Although the names have been changed, the experiences are real and these triumphs are just some of the examples of the spirit and dignity found in every corner of our region.*

### The Highs and Lows of Making a New Life in Canada

Ali had a good job back in Khartoum, Sudan. With an honours degree in economics from a prestigious university, Ali quickly worked his way up to the position of Senior Planning Officer in the Ministry of Finance & Economic Planning for the Government of Sudan. In his position, Ali was responsible for negotiating the terms and financing of large-scale development projects in Agriculture, Education and Health with national ministries, regional governments and international donors (World Bank, African Development Bank, and the European Economic Community).

While Ali was hard at work, his wife was busy working on her own career. She obtained a degree in Family Sciences at a respected women's university and began teaching there soon after. Her sights were set on earning her Ph.D.

### Leaving Sudan and Coming to Canada

In the mid 1990's, Ali's family fortunes took a turn for the worse. Political strife in the country brought to power a regime that not

only disagreed with the western orientation of the previous government, but also one that was actively hostile to the people associated with that group - Ali was such a person.

Ali arrived in Canada in 1993 as a political refugee and settled in St. Catharines, Ontario where he awaited the arrival of his wife. He immediately rolled up his sleeves to build a better life for his family (they would not arrive in Canada for three years). Unlike many refugees and immigrants, Ali started in Canada with an advantage; he spoke excellent English, a skill that had been developed through school and work. He did, however, want to brush up on skills to make him more marketable in the Canadian work environment, and he took several computer courses at Niagara College and job search workshops at the YMCA.

While these courses were useful, Ali was unsuccessful in his job search. Still unfamiliar with the job market and with few contacts, Ali struggled to identify employment opportunities that 'fit' his training in economics and administration. In those few instances where he did find such opportunities, he found employers were not confident in his past experience and credentials from Sudan.

In 1995, Ali secured a job with a retailer, stocking shelves and serving customers. Though grateful for the job, Ali was dissatisfied that he was not using his skills and found it difficult to make ends meet for his family on the wages he was receiving. After several years of plugging away, Ali's family left St. Catharines for Kitchener-Waterloo in 1998, in the hope that they would find better employment prospects and an improved quality of life.

Once in K-W, Ali became involved with a local agency supporting New Canadians in their job search. The agency found a non-paid work placement with a local economic development agency where Ali could become familiar and obtain some hands-on experience with this line of work in Canada. Ali finished the placement and was fortunate to be offered a six-month position as Administrative Officer for the local agency that helped him find the job placement. Ali is coming to the end of this contract with mixed feelings about his next steps. On one hand, he is pleased that he has gained some experience, albeit modest, using his economics and administrative skills in Canada. However, he is very concerned that employers will treat this experience lightly and continue to disregard his hard-won skills and education in Sudan.

Ali and his family continue to live with hope and confidence. But they often think of going to the United States with its improved job prospects, or even home to Sudan, despite the dangers that may await them there.



## THE STRUGGLE FOR SELF

Pamela was born and raised in this area. She attended the University of Guelph and in the late 70's was prepared to begin a career in Social Services. This goal led her to move to Toronto in 1979 and work in the shelter system for the next 15 years. But the career she thought would be life-long suddenly changed when family demands required her to move back to Waterloo Region.

Having many years of experience in the Toronto system of shelters should have been an exceptional background to transfer to this area. However, the specific type of experience did not fit the needs of Pamela's

hometown. Deciding that maybe a career change was in order, Pamela retrained herself in aesthetics and aromatherapy and tried to start her own business. The strain and uncertainty of a new business, however, were too much to handle and Pamela found that she could not support herself with her own business.

For a couple of years, Pamela worked in contract positions, holding several short-term jobs but never coming across anything permanent. Having been out of the stream of looking for work for a few years, Pamela found that even her resume needed to be updated and she struggled with the format and presentation styles that had changed so much. Pamela found that she had to relearn the 'trends' in resume presentation and, through trial and error, she found that she needed more than one approach to get an interview since employers had different expectations. In some cases, she had to downplay her vast experience because, by this point, she was willing to "take anything" to have an income.

Eventually, Pamela ended up on social assistance and worked in the retail sector earning minimum wage. Her talent and experience overqualified her for many of the jobs she was applying for, but she could no longer afford to be selective. She took every job she could possibly get, deciding that the longer she was unemployed the worse it looked to potential employers.

During this time of flux, Pamela experienced the self-esteem issues that so many people deal with everyday when faced with employment instability. She felt the need to do anything to support herself but realized that her talents and capabilities were not being recognized. This lack of esteem, she felt, came across in interviews and continued to get stronger with each rejection and disappointment. Realizing that the job market for which she was qualified was not providing her with any prospects, the struggle to regain the skills of job search led her to Lutherwood CODA in search of assistance.

Today, Pamela is employed full-time in a social services setting. However, she recognizes the immense struggle for people in poverty and the barriers they face when searching for a job. Employers sometimes do not recognize transferable skills and demand that applicants adhere to the latest trends in such things as resume styles and interview skills.

The challenge to maintain a sense of pride and self-esteem is ongoing in the search for employment. Those in poverty deal with a lowered sense of identity, which is increasingly difficult to overcome to successfully meet the high standards of today's employers.

## SURFACING HIDDEN ATTITUDES

Developing a productive workforce is a crucial part of business success. But what makes a productive group lose its ability to function at full capacity? The attitudes that people bring to work about themselves, their community, and their workplace affect their ability to interact positively with co-workers. These attitudes can hamper their own success and the success of others, ultimately affecting your productivity and bottom line.

Attitudes within the workplace also have a major impact on those living in poverty. They may create or reinforce stereotypes and barriers that exist and impede the progress and opportunity for many people. Hidden attitudes can hurt your employees and financial health in business. Recognizing and dealing with these attitudes may enable the successful integration of employees and lead your business to a diverse, productive workforce. Taking the first step is made easier with the accompanying audit - a few questions that will require little time but which may generate some thought about the hidden practices and attitudes about the poor that may exist within your organization.

Continual examination of the workplace is an integral role for Human Resources departments. Discovering hidden barriers that may affect the success of some employees can be challenging. This audit is only a beginning. If you require more information, please visit the Opportunities 2000 website at [www.op2000.org](http://www.op2000.org).

**Refer to page 8 for the audit ▶**

## HR PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Circle the answer that best reflects your Human Resource practices, then add up your total score below.	No; Never; Strongly disagree	No; Disagree; Seldom	Don't know; Sometimes; N/A	Yes; Agree; Often	Yes; Strongly Agree; Always
Do you have a diverse workforce that represents the full range of socioeconomic levels within your community?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you hire people with disabilities to fill positions within your company?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you have training programs available to employees that enable personal growth?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you emphasize personal traits as well as technical skills for entry-level jobs in your organization?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you involve local organizations that work with low-income groups in your recruitment practices?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you provide new employees with all the necessary equipment and support to start a job (i.e., necessary safety equipment, orientation and training, and job buddies)?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you assist with parking allowances, transportation costs or training costs for new hires?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you have rewards or recognition programs in place that would benefit a low-income employee?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you offer flextime schedules that are conducive to your business needs and available to all employees?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you offer a formal orientation program for new hires? Do you have a high retention rate with new hires?	1	2	3	4	5
Do your employees understand and recognize the benefits of a diverse workforce?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you use methods of employee communication that are clear and concise for new hires?	1	2	3	4	5
<b>TOTAL FOR EACH COLUMN:</b>					

**TOTAL SCORE:**

(Add column totals together): \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW DO YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES MEASURE UP?

### IF YOU SCORED:

**13 to 25:** Low marks. Take another look at your HR policies and procedures. There's a good possibility that your current practices need to be updated. This low score indicates that you could be doing a great deal more to benefit your business, your employees and others in this region who are living in poverty.

**26 to 38:** Needs some work. You have a few good initiatives in place, but there is still work to be done. Your current HR policies and procedures may be too informal or unstructured. Examine what is working, and where the holes are. Organize your HR practices into a more consistent, formal program.

**39 to 51:** Average, but growing. Some of your HR practices are current and up-to-date, but there are still some gray areas. You believe that you can play an even bigger role in poverty reduction through new HR initiatives. You want to learn and grow your business and its involvement in the community.

**52 to 65:** Top marks. You are a leader in HR practices to reduce poverty in Waterloo Region. Your employee policies are above average and always current. You should consider sharing your success stories with others in the community.

Some companies demonstrate commitment to people and reap the benefits of this investment in human resources each and every day. In different ways the following companies exemplify the value found in that commitment and what it can do for their business and the communities in which they operate.

## KPMG LLP A PROFILE

With a strong commitment to support local initiatives, **KPMG**, a professional services firm in Waterloo, recognizes the importance of being an active participant in the community. The company has included this philosophy of commitment in a corporate value statement.

For the people of **KPMG**, community commitment comes in many forms, including corporate volunteerism. Volunteering the company's extensive skills and expertise in the community is vital to many initiatives and programs that deal with the rise in poverty in Waterloo Region. This type of volunteer commitment is a mainstay in opening up the channels of communication to promote awareness of the issues that plague our community.

However, commitment from a corporate mandate is not enough to solve the problem. The true value of this type of volunteerism comes from the people themselves. It is the commitment and participation of people like Joseph Allen and Rose Mailloux, who lend their expertise to projects like Opportunities 2000, that make the relationship between the volunteer and the community a success. Joe is Project Leader, Americas Transition Task Force, **KPMG**, Canada and Co-Chair of the Opportunities 2000 Leadership Roundtable. Rose is Board Liaison, KW Chamber of Commerce, Partner at **KPMG** and a member of the Leadership Roundtable for Opportunities 2000. For **KPMG**, building relationships in the community makes good business sense.

**KPMG's** commitment to reducing poverty extends beyond the boundaries of Waterloo Region. The opportunity to offer assistance through volunteerism is a local initiative that characterizes each **KPMG** office. Corporately, **KPMG**, in cooperation with Cisco Systems and the United Nations Development Programme, hosts a global NetAid website. This website is the "window on the world of extreme poverty" and NetAid is an innovative step in the global fight against poverty. On October 9, 1999, 30 major artists performed at different venues around the world, reaching an online viewing audience in the millions. The involvement and participation of **KPMG** has facilitated a partnership between different sources such as musicians, not-for-profit organizations and corporate sponsors. This large-scale effort and commitment to ending world poverty coupled with the company's ongoing volunteer efforts makes **KPMG** an extremely valuable corporate citizen.



## KUNTZ ELECTROPLATING

### A PROFILE

**KUNTZ ELECTROPLATING** of Kitchener is one of many innovative and committed local companies that support their employees and extends that commitment throughout the Region of Waterloo. Walking into this company gives you an understanding of the vitality of the workplace, which promotes an open-door policy.

Many of the practices that contribute to **KUNTZ ELECTROPLATING's** success highlight the issues faced by those in poverty. They are outstanding examples of ways in which companies can make a difference in the lives of their employees. Human Resource practices that contribute to the well-being of the employees at **KUNTZ** include:

- an Employee Assistance Program;
- on-site educational opportunities with the Partners in Education Program in association with The Board of Education;
- a Profit Sharing Retirement Program;
- an Incentive Program that offers a share in the company profits on a monthly basis;

- a free four-hour bonus program;
- overtime pay after 36 hours;
- educational assistance for approved work-related courses;
- an extensive social and recreational association offering picnics, family days, Christmas parties and various social activities throughout the year.

In addition to its comprehensive employee programs, **KUNTZ** also takes an active role in the community through its participation with community groups, charities and local organizations.

As a family-owned business, the company's Management and Human Resources personnel support the values of family and community, which transcend the workplace into the community. Whether that means being a United Way supporter or encouraging employee development through education and recognition programs, there is a continued dedication to fair treatment and community spirit at **KUNTZ**.



## S-S TECHNOLOGIES

### A PROFILE

Successful practices are about opportunity, but they're not limited to HR departments. Some have their roots firmly entrenched throughout the organization, with full commitment by senior management - right from the top down. A definite example of a philosophy of caring, understanding, and 'people above all else' can be seen in the leadership of Rick Brock at **S-S TECHNOLOGIES**.

As part of the Leadership Roundtable for Opportunities 2000, Mr. Brock takes an active role in the quality of life in Waterloo Region. His community involvement also extends to other regional programs such as the New Canadians Program and the Technology Program at Conestoga College.

**S-S TECHNOLOGIES** regularly provides work placements through the New Canadians Program - job placements that lead to jobs for those from other parts of the world with the skills and aptitude sought by **S-S TECHNOLOGIES**. The company also invests in local

education and skills training by sponsoring several labs at Conestoga College, offering student scholarships and hiring graduates.

The guiding philosophy at **S-S TECHNOLOGIES** revolves around the formation of teams based on the recognition of people as individuals. Team managers and team leaders must understand that employees may be dealing with challenges outside the work environment and that these concerns may affect their work performance. However, self-motivation, decision-making, sound judgement and the ability to take risks are at the core of successful business. By recognizing that people create successful business, **S-S TECHNOLOGIES** has created a corporate culture that encourages people to take risks. The support of Rick Brock and the management structure ensures that every opportunity for improvement and success is made available to all employees, which translates into success for the business.

Known for its relaxed, empowering management style, **S-S TECHNOLOGIES** recognizes employees for



their hard work and dedication through incentives, including a 7% profit sharing pool for non-management, and another 3% discretionary pool. Employee ownership may be offered to members of the team who create value for the organization. Equity in the company is a goal that many employees reach for every day.

Mr. Brock recognizes that opportunity is important, not only for long-standing employees of **S-S TECHNOLOGIES** but also for new hires. Like the high-technology industry, which is constantly changing, the team of employees must also grow in new directions. To achieve this successfully, all employees must have equal opportunities to create value and earn recognition, delivering rewards to themselves, their colleagues and the company.



**ROYAL BANK  
FINANCIAL GROUP®**

## **ROYAL BANK OF CANADA A PROFILE**

One of the most significant factors in corporate social responsibility is leadership. As the opening preamble to this booklet demonstrates, John Cleghorn realizes the value **ROYAL BANK OF CANADA** contributes to communities across this country. However, the value and strength of this organization lies beyond the words, in the programs that benefit the employees of **ROYAL BANK** and in the commitment that this organization has in working within local communities, focusing on improving the way of life for everyone in those communities. Empowering people in the workplace through programs that meet their needs gives them the opportunity and freedom to contribute to their own communities.

The Work.Family.Life initiative demonstrates the commitment and giving found in the many programs set up to assist employees of **ROYAL BANK**. Included in this corporate initiative are a Policy Statement; Child and Eldercare Information Services and Resources; Leave Policies; Flexible Working Arrangements (such as reduced hours, job sharing,

flextime, modified work weeks, flexiplace and phased retirement); Relocation Assistance; Wellness Programs, including an Employee & Family Assistance Program; and Financial and Retirement Planning.

Achieving a healthy balance between work and personal life is recognized as an important consideration for employees. This means offering assistance in everything from stress and change management techniques, to offering parenting guidance through seminars and resources, to recognizing and assisting in the needs for childcare and eldercare.

**ROYAL BANK** has a Corporate Donations Program, which is designed to give money to assist educational, health, cultural, charitable and other international, national and local community organizations whose work enhances quality of life. These donations support endeavours that benefit the community, and thus the bank's customers, employees, and shareholders, by improving the quality of community services. In 1999, the After-School Grants program was created and is available to community organizations that are focused on keeping youth (K-12) positively engaged in schools. In addition, the Employee Volunteer Program allows employees to apply for financial contributions towards the organizations in which they are involved and support.



## **WORK.FAMILY.LIFE INITIATIVES**

**CORPORATE DONATIONS PROGRAM  
AFTER SCHOOL GRANTS PROGRAM  
EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM  
TUITION ASSISTANCE  
EMPLOYEE SECONDMENTS  
LOCAL INITIATIVES**

such as the  
**BETTER GIVING/BETTER LIVING PROGRAM  
and NUTRITION FOR LEARNING**



Through the encouragement and support of community-minded efforts, the donations program provides visible expressions of the bank's social responsibility and thus enhances its public reputation, making for good business practice and socially responsible action.

Other corporate programs include a Tuition Assistance Program, a Savings and Share Ownership Plan, a Short-Term Incentive Program, and Employee Secondments, which on a limited basis, provide opportunities for an employee to be seconded to a non-profit organization for a defined period.

How do these programs relate to poverty reduction within our community? Foremost, they recognize the challenges of the individual within each work situation and attempt to meet the varying needs of those individuals in their every day lives. This help may assist many people in their efforts to enhance

employability skills and thus maintain a standard within each community for better living. Employed people with resources for assistance within the workplace have an opportunity to make their own situations better and are then able to give of themselves within those communities that support them. These programs also provide valuable learning tools for basic skills in our community.

At the local level, the Nutrition for Learning Program in the K-W Region is backed by **ROYAL BANK** and is a vital part of dealing with the issues of poverty in our region and the many children going to school hungry.

The Better Giving/Better Living Program, found in Waterloo Region, recognizes that the people who work at **ROYAL BANK** are the same people who live in this community. The philosophical link between the ideas of better giving to this community and better living within this community has residual positive effects for both the community at large and individual employees. Engaging the hearts and minds of the people at **ROYAL BANK** does translate into business sense for the bank. The sense of pride experienced by those employed by the bank within this community translates into pride and a sense of achievement within the workplace. This sense of personal pride reflects an organizational pride, which, in turn, makes good business sense.

## HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Opening up avenues of opportunity for people and business is the main focus of HR Practices.

Human Resources plays a dynamic and active role in a successful business strategy, but it is also important to understand the impact HR practices have on the success of people. Recognizing the impact that HR policies have on community prosperity and the fight to reduce poverty in Waterloo Region is also important.

The following section highlights some of the Human Resource Practices found in this region. They are highlighted because of their relevance to business success, but they also have significant value in reducing poverty by opening doors of opportunity. You are encouraged to consider the effects these practices may have on the barriers experienced by those living in poverty outlined previously.

## WORKFORCE PLANNING

### A Look to the Future

The importance of workforce planning is usually understated and sometimes forgotten in the rush of daily business demands. However, some forethought about the future can benefit your business and your employees. The value of planning for the slow times can mean extra work for the HR department but it can be beneficial to the success of maintaining a strong and vibrant workforce.

#### **PILLER'S HAS MAINTAINED A 10-YEAR NO-LAYOFF PERIOD BY EMPLOYING THEIR WORKFORCE DURING SLOW PERIODS IN OTHER CAPACITIES**

**PILLER'S** of Waterloo understands this concept and actively strives to maintain their employee base by using the various skills of their employees to their advantage (and also to the advantage of the employees!). One of the ways that **PILLER'S** has maintained a 10-year no-layoff period has been to employ their workforce in other areas of the company during slow periods. By taking people off the line, using their skills as painters to provide a fresh coat of paint within the plant or office area, management has been able to temporarily transfer skills and maintain employment for their workforce. Not only does it benefit the employee, but the company also gets some much-needed painting done!

Workforce planning is beneficial to everyone. Reducing the numbers of people out of work by maintaining a constant workforce strikes a positive balance and is a benefit to everyone in the community.

## RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

### The Search for Skills

Recruitment strategies within the workplace can serve many purposes, but some can also limit an employer's access to qualified and able employees. Discovering how your strategies work and positively affect the

hiring of employees may be a valuable exercise in itself.

Proactive recruiting is an important step in developing an effective workforce and positively positioning your company within a competitive marketplace. The first step in proactive recruitment involves understanding the needs associated with the recruitment initiative. What does recruiting mean to you? Are you simply filling positions or are you creating a strategic workforce that will successfully propel your business into the new and diverse marketplace of the future.

Different recruitment techniques are utilized in different offices within our region. One of the most interesting practices occurs at **B&W HEAT TREATING** in Kitchener. Human Resources personnel at **B&W** use Emotional Intelligence assessments in their recruitment initiatives. Emotional Intelligence is the practice of recognizing the qualities of each individual as they relate to a particular situation or environment. Hiring people means more than just hiring skills; it means recognizing the 'fit' of each individual employee with the culture of the organization. The benefits of this strategy in terms of



poverty reduction are twofold. First: people without the necessary skills but who possess the drive and attitude to succeed in this environment, are given the opportunity to sell themselves. Second: within a unionized environment, certain personality traits may be more conducive to working successfully within this organization. This hiring practice at **B&W HEAT TREATING** ensures more successful recruitment and minimizes the costs associated with employee turnover, decreased productivity and replacement.

#### **B&W HEAT TREATING IN KITCHENER USES EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS IN THEIR RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES**



**IT IS HUMAN NATURE TO WANT TO BELONG. THE FEELING OF CONFUSION THAT MANY EXPERIENCE IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS OR WEEKS OF A NEW JOB CAN HAVE NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON RETENTION AND SUCCESS OF VALUABLE EMPLOYEES**

## **FITTING IN!**

### **Orientation & Integration to the Workplace**

The success of your employees may be directly related to the feeling of belonging when first entering the workplace.

Every new employee wants to make a good first impression. It is human nature to want to belong, but the feeling of confusion that many new employees experience in the first few days or weeks of a new job can have a negative impact on retaining valuable people. This is especially true for those new employees who may have low self-esteem due to their social situation, financial, or language barriers.

We have all had similar feelings of stress and fear, but the anxiety associated with starting a new job can be tremendous. To offset these negative influences, it's important to have a clear and consistent orientation guideline that is followed for every new employee. This might include such things as instructions for using office equipment, or where to find supplies and materials. In addition, the orientation program might include a tour and introductions to people in other areas of the facility. Of course, they may not remember the names of these people, yet if just one person recognizes them later in the day and offers some assistance, then integration into the workplace has started.

Consider the new employee who does not speak English. Should you disregard those candidates who may be qualified, willing and eager to work, simply because they have not mastered the language? **ELMIRA POULTRY** does not think so! They provide, where possible, translators from within their workforce to aide in the orientation and integration process. In this way, new employees are better able to understand the requirements of the job, and the necessary information that is relevant to their role within the company. While they do encourage ESL training for more complete job performance, managers recognize that the language issue is a barrier that should not preclude the hiring of qualified individuals.

Mentoring or job shadowing programs at all levels of business make sense and can pave the way for an easy and productive transition into a new job. The objective, with these and other employee programs, is to reduce the cost of employee turnover, which can negatively affect profit and productivity. The cost of turnover is also detrimental to people in poverty, resulting in ongoing job search costs, lowered self-esteem and increased likelihood of continued reliance on social assistance programs.



Putting poultry on every plate.

## CREATIVE COMPENSATION

The connection between poverty reduction and compensation policies is quite obvious. However, there are a number of innovative compensation schemes being implemented by many organizations, which help to offset the costs associated with employment, for those employees who are affected by poverty. The issues of daycare, extended benefits, training and education, and even parking or transportation costs can be addressed to aid those with limited income. Overcoming these barriers to success for employees leads to increased morale, lower absenteeism, improved job performance and overall productivity. Clearly, taking another look at traditional compensation plans can be beneficial for both employees and organizations who seek to maintain a dynamic, productive workforce.

Those employers who have achieved the greatest success in developing their employee base are those who recognize that employees are individuals, each with unique skills, values, needs and challenges. In an effort to accommodate these employees, some organizations offer non-traditional benefits, employee support programs, variable work arrangements or direct cash compensation procedures.

*What you pay your employees is completely within your discretion and there are many factors that must be weighed to determine the "going rate" within your industry.* However, an important consideration in the area of compensation may be the overall effect on productivity and quality of work. The workplace today, in every form, is competitive and constantly changing. Understanding that change may be beneficial in many areas also means understanding that constant change in your employee group may not be beneficial in terms of turnover costs, training costs and benefit costs. How do these costs relate to your compensation philosophy? How do you, then, compensate your employees fairly while still

maintaining a system that works within your business plan? This is different for every business and should include ideas and solutions pertinent to your workforce and your business needs.

**THE WORKPLACE TODAY, IN EVERY FORM, IS COMPETITIVE AND CONSTANTLY CHANGING.**

At **KUNTZ ELECTROPLATING**, in Kitchener, there is a practice in place that benefits both the employee and the employer and has positive implications for improving employee commitment and reducing poverty. Employees work three 12-hour shifts per week, totaling 36 hours. If they arrive on time and complete all three shifts, they are paid a four-hour bonus each week, for a total of 40 hours. This program is activated for each new employee as soon as employment commences. The value of a program of this nature recognizes the value of the employee who is consistent in attendance and is an immediate recognition of commitment from the employer and the employee. The benefits for both the employer and the employee are realized: the employee gains additional pay for being a committed employee, while the employer gains commitment from employees and ensures the smooth operation of the production line.

## BENEFITS AND EMPLOYEE SUPPORTS

### Beyond the Paycheque

Benefits and Employee Supports extend beyond the regularly administered benefits program offered by many companies today. Supporting those people who work for you requires going that extra step to develop outlets for assistance beyond the standard paycheque or claim form. Many employers now have Employee Assistance Programs (EAP's),

**THE TYPES OF SUPPORTS REQUIRED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE WORKPLACE MAY BE DIFFERENT FOR EACH EMPLOYEE**

which offer counseling for both the employees and their families who may have concerns. Dealing with issues affecting self-esteem may be vitally important to the continuous success of those in poverty. EAP's provide many different types of counseling to help people cope with issues that might present barriers to continued employment. The various types of supports available within any workplace may be diverse. However, employers understand that many different programs may be favourable to the ongoing improvement and well-being of their workforce. Wellness programs are found in many area businesses

and include initiatives such as regular flu shots and visits by occupational health nurses to answer questions about health issues - work or non-work related.

The most important aspect of any employee support program is to understand the needs of your workforce, and the most effective way to learn their needs is to ask them. One simple way to do this effectively is to form a task group of employee, management and HR personnel to examine the needs of the group. A simple survey of the larger group is also beneficial in identifying key issues in the workplace.

Providing supports for the people working within your organization not only helps in the reduction of poverty, but it makes sense from a business perspective as well. Consider the Interest Free Computer Purchase Loan Program at **ELMIRA POULTRY**. Loaning employees money to purchase computers and then deducting payments from each paycheque provides an opportunity to improve their skills and knowledge by becoming more computer literate.

For those employees who are New Canadians, the benefits may extend beyond the workplace. However, the benefit to the community is directly related to the opportunity presented by this program. The children of these workers have the chance to own and "be connected" to the information and technology made available through computers, which enables them to excel and progress with equal opportunity.

## **FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

Flexible work schedules reflect a current trend toward greater diversity, individual orientation and adaptability of HR policies to address personal needs. Flextime helps employees juggle the demands of work and family. By accommodating these needs, employers are able to attract and retain qualified employees. Flextime programs should be designed to meet the needs of employees and the standards of employer expectations to ensure competitiveness and productivity are maintained.

Implementing a flextime program may not be feasible in every area of your business, but it may be a beneficial option for certain departments. Criteria to

consider when planning a flexible work schedule may include: your customers' business hours; peak transaction times; key times for work with affiliated agencies; and general industry standards. Flextime may lead to a reduction in turnover due to increased worker satisfaction.

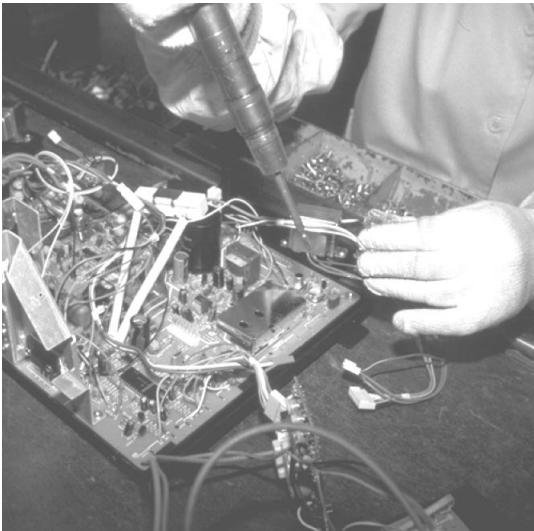
Consider the person who must take public transit to work. The bus may not come past your door until 9:15 but his workday starts at 9:00. Does he leave his house an hour early, and pay for extra daycare, knowing that he gets paid only for the hours between 9 and 5, or is it feasible to allow him to work from 9:15 to 5:15? Every business has core operating hours, but giving workers an opportunity to adjust their work schedules according to their needs around those core hours of your business can be beneficial to maintaining a quality team of employees.

**EQUITABLE LIFE OF CANADA**, in Waterloo, is an employer who offers flextime for staff. Recognizing that the hours of 9-3 are vital to the type of business

### **FLEXTIME HELPS EMPLOYEES JUGGLE THE DEMANDS OF WORK AND FAMILY**

they operate, they allow employees to arrange their schedules accordingly. Some prefer to work early mornings and leave by 3; others prefer to work later. The option to "bank" hours (up to 37.5) is available for employees for their personal needs, allowing them time off for appointments and other commitments. These banked hours can be built up again after they have been used. The option to use three flex days, annually, for family sick days (spouse or child) is also an attractive one for employees.

The links between poverty reduction and flextime arrangements are many. Transportation issues, child-care and eldercare arrangements can be better managed. Plus, a balance between work and home life can be maintained, which has a positive effect on the productivity, the morale and the success of all employees, particularly those affected by poverty. Other flexible working arrangements, such as flexplace, telecommuting, and job sharing may also benefit employees and employers by creating a work-life balance.



## LEARNING & PERSONAL GROWTH

Employees thrive on opportunities to expand their knowledge, thus enriching both their own potential and their value to their employer. Many employers recognize the value of keeping their employees up-to-date on work-related business issues and trends. This might include seminars on computer systems, production line equipment or employee benefits programs.

Many businesses within the region offer subsidized educational opportunities. **TOYOTA MOTOR MANUFACTURING CANADA, B&W HEAT TREATING, KUNTZ ELECTROPLATING, MANULIFE, EQUITABLE LIFE OF CANADA,** and **PILLER'S** all subsidize training for their employees. Many companies have programs that pay 100% of the cost of work-related courses and will subsidize other courses with prior approval.

But what about mandatory training that provides some basic education for success in the workplace, and also contributes to the skill level in the community beyond the workplace?

**THE CITY OF WATERLOO** recognizes that certain skills and training are necessary to be a vital and

productive part of the team. Within their Vision/Values mandate, they have mandated training for all permanent full and part-time employees, in the following areas: Understanding Change, Team Communication Skills, Effective Teaming, and Conflict in Teams. These structured courses are focused around awareness and skill building, leading to continual improvement not only within the organization but also in preparation for any movement outside the organization. These are core competencies necessary for progress and success within today's work world.

Another important, but very different, practice for employee supports that has a direct bearing on poverty reduction is the standard Performance Appraisal. Performance Management is one of those areas of HR that sometimes gets overlooked in favour of expediency. However, the benefits realized by both employer and employee may strengthen a work relationship - and the productivity of the workplace - in many different ways. As an example, **THE CITY OF WATERLOO** provides team leaders in both technical and behavioural areas. The team leader develops a relationship with the employee that is of value to both. A **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS (PDP)** is used to assess the necessary skill level of the employee and the learning required to

maintain and increase the skill level of that employee. There is also a Behavioural Assessment that looks at exhibited positive behaviour, which is measured according to the values for success outlined by the organization. To complete the appraisal process, a 360-degree performance evaluation and a self-evaluation are done, giving every opportunity for people to recognize their strengths and potential areas for improvement.

How does this relate to the issue of poverty reduction? One of the main issues affecting success in the workplace revolves around feelings of inadequacy, stemming from low self-esteem. People need to know how they perform and need to have their strengths highlighted for them. We all understand that we have weaknesses, but the recognition that we also add value to the organization makes it easier to strive for success. Every effort that encourages personal growth through recognition of an individual's intrinsic value and relative strength creates an opportunity for even more success for both the employer and the employee.

## DIVERSITY

*Diversity - the mosaic of people who bring a variety of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the groups and organizations with which they interact.* ([www.empoweringdiversity.com](http://www.empoweringdiversity.com))

"The concept of diversity works to shape the future of business more than any other because it is about an environment fueled by opportunity for everyone. For the future, adaptability will be the key to success. The bottom line is that government cannot force people or organizations to accept those who are different - but the economy can." ([www.empoweringdiversity.com](http://www.empoweringdiversity.com))

Diversity initiatives are often steeped in political policies and controversy, making it difficult to create truly effective diversity programs that represent the community in which you operate and make good business sense as well.

It is generally understood that those segments of the population who are most affected by diversity issues

**THE ONLY SUSTAINABLE ADVANTAGE TO AN ORGANIZATION IS ITS PEOPLE.**



## **CONDUCT SENSITIVITY TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES**

include the underprivileged, disabled, visible minorities and women. Embracing diversity might simply mean recognizing that it exists and offering training that addresses the challenges faced by these groups.

Sensitivity training, such as that conducted three times a year at **CONESTOGA-ROVERS & ASSOCIATES**, can open up a whole new perspective for many people who have never thought about the barriers or challenges of the disabled and other minorities. This kind of training can enhance the working life of many people, facilitating new opportunity for those in poverty and members of the identified groups trying to get a foothold in the world of work.

But diversity means more than having representation from minority groups. Diversity within your community encompasses different skill sets, a wide range of life experiences, varying positions within the social structure of the community and attachment or roots in the community. One thing is certain. Diversity is a good business practice that can be beneficial to the wealth of your organization and also lead to social change within the community. Just as the community supports your business, so should your business support the community. Within the sphere of the workplace today, it is necessary to recognize that the world at large is represented. With increased globalization, even the smallest businesses are impacted by the way the business world operates. See what having different faces and different perspectives can do for your business success.

**WORKFORCE DIVERSIFICATION IS NOT  
ONLY THE RIGHT THING TO DO, IT WILL  
ENHANCE THE ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE  
AND COMPETITIVENESS OF THE  
ORGANIZATION**

## **REWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

There is a lot of value placed on a job well done. And while it may be a great thing to receive praise and plaques, for those in poverty these gestures of appreciation may make no difference to their immediate needs and may not have a strong motivational impact. Providing relevant incentives that increase productivity and employee morale may be beneficial for the entire employee population and may also serve as a step toward poverty relief.

Rather than plaques or certificates for achievement, consider giving out gift certificates for groceries or, as at **TOYOTA MOTOR MANUFACTURING CANADA (TMMC)**, giving employees a choice of different gift certificates, accompanied by a recognition letter from the president. This choice of gift certificates ensures that the employees realize a definite benefit that is appropriate to their individual needs. In addition, your reward monies are being well spent in useful ways.

### **GIVE PEOPLE A CHOICE OF REWARDS**

Incentive programs can result in an increased sense of dedication, leading to productivity growth from employee groups and a higher morale within your workforce. The benefits realized by employers providing small but practical rewards and recognition are twofold. First, the employee benefits with increased self-esteem and a useful reward. Second, the employer benefits from increased output and productivity with a sense of dedication and appreciation. The two, hand in hand, make non-traditional employee reward and recognition programs very attractive from both perspectives.

It is important to recognize that the benefits of rewards and recognition programs can only be realized if communication about the program is clear, to ensure that:

- Employees are aware of the existence of the program;
- Employees fully understand what they must accomplish to win an award;

- Employees believe the program is in active use

**TOYOTA MOTOR MANUFACTURING CANADA (TMMC)** has a very detailed rewards and recognition program clearly explained in a brochure that is distributed to all team members. This brochure

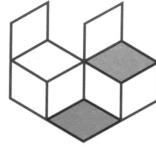
**TMMC HAS A DETAILED REWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM OUTLINED IN A BROCHURE SO ALL TEAM MEMBERS KNOW WHAT THEY CAN STRIVE FOR**

outlines the focus of the rewards program, the criteria for meeting the standards set for varying awards, and the specific gains to be made by achieving these standards. Each team member has a clear picture of the requirements for rewards based on safety, attendance and hours of work. The potential payout for each of these rewards is clearly stated and acts as a goal that sets a standard for excellence. Why is this a relevant practice for poverty reduction? Clearly defined terms of reference allow employees to strive, build self-esteem and reap practical rewards, making monetary gains that are appropriate to their needs. Clear communication is the first step to success.

## RETENTION PLANNING

### Keeping the Best

Many companies with high retention rates and long-term successful employees recognize the need to develop their employees beginning with the first day of



## Boehmer Box Corporation

employment. This might involve training initiatives that focus on individual employee traits that are conducive to specific positions within the company. It may also include a comprehensive overview of the necessary traits of a successful employee during the orientation and integration process. The most valuable and workable form of retention planning can be simply providing the necessary training for lateral and upward movement within your own company. Promoting from within makes sense for most companies, and **BOEHMER BOX CORPORATION** is no exception. Their philosophy is one that makes sense and supports a business philosophy that values long-term employee retention. Promotion from within the ranks of **BOEHMER BOX CORPORATION** generates the knowledge and experience needed for ongoing smooth operation. It is also a good practice in the fight to reduce poverty within our region. By promoting from within, **BOEHMER BOX CORPORATION** creates opportunity for people to gain new experiences, improve their financial situation and improve their job satisfaction. As well, the strategy creates new opportunities for less experienced workers to fill the positions left vacant by those who are promoted.

Retention planning also means ensuring that the new employee knows exactly what is required to work successfully in the position for which they were hired. Realistic Job Previews may be incorporated into the initial interview process so that only serious candidates pursue employment. At **BOEHMER BOX CORPORATION**, potential employees are taken on a tour of the plant so that working conditions and expectations are demonstrated.

Does this fit into the concept of retention planning? **ABSOLUTELY!!!** Those employees who know what to expect from 'day one' are serious about the job you



are offering and no surprises will scare them off. Once a potential employee understands the demands of the job, the first step to developing a successful and productive employee has been accomplished.

**PROMOTION FROM WITHIN THE RANKS  
GENERATES THE KNOWLEDGE AND  
EXPERIENCE NEEDED FOR ONGOING  
SMOOTH OPERATION**

## SUPPORT FOR RETIREES

### Experience of a Lifetime

Retirement is a stage of life that many people look forward to, but few are truly prepared for when it arrives. They spend most of their adult lives running a race and suddenly they reach a certain age and are told they are no longer needed in the same capacity. The shock of this change can lead to problems for many people, both emotionally and financially.

A Human Resource practice supported by **B&W HEAT TREATING** is the utilization of community-based programs and courses that focus on the path to retirement. These courses are suggested for employees who can benefit from information and other forms of support in their retirement planning. They provide opportunities for retiring employees to network with others in similar situations and gain relevant information and support within the community. Companies, like **B&W HEAT TREATING**, also offer retirement planning consulting for their salaried employees to foster a smoother financial transition from work to retirement.

What about those people who may have reached retirement age, but are not ready to retire? The opportunity to utilize their skills and knowledge may be available to employers on many different levels. For example, **MANULIFE** hires retirees for contract work and also encourages their involvement as volunteers for company events. Mentoring is also a good way to pass along valuable experience and insights from retirees to new employees. Mentoring provides a fluid transition for the retiree and also

provides training expertise for new entrants to the workforce so that they may get a positive start in the workplace. The benefits for poverty reduction come from the increased performance and ability, which leads to higher rates of job retention. Providing opportunities for retirees to continue in a productive manner will benefit not only the individual, but also your business and the community as a whole.

**MANULIFE HIRES  
RETIRES ON  
CONTRACT WORK  
AND ALSO HAS  
THEM VOLUNTEER  
FOR COMPANY  
EVENTS**



# THE TIME IS NOW!

## A BIAS FOR ACTION

The economic prosperity of Waterloo Region has been forged through hard work, dedication, and an entrepreneurial spirit, resulting in a high standard of living for most of the population. But there is an increasing need and the rise in poverty for people in Waterloo Region necessitates more than just a second look. Problems don't go away if they get ignored. This is an issue that we can no longer afford to ignore in the hope that it will take care of itself. It is time for organizations LIKE YOURS to take a leadership role, whether big or small, by being aware of the existence of poverty within this region, by understanding the ramifications it has on the people of this region, and by recognizing and implementing workable solutions that may alleviate poverty within the region. Like every worthwhile goal, reaching it successfully must begin with small steps taken within each and every organization in the region.

By looking at the HR practices within your organization, you can take the necessary first steps to recognize how you can contribute to the overall health of our community. Not only will it aid the economic situation for this region but it may lead to a stronger, more dynamic workforce in your organization. As vital members of this community, we are each responsible for continuing to strive to make Waterloo Region the 'best place to live and work'.

Everyone in our community deserves equal opportunities to prosper and grow in the workplace, while balancing their home and family responsibilities. What can you do that makes sense for your business and offers a chance for people to improve their lives? Leadership within the business world means taking small steps within your own business, which will translate into success and profitability for you, your employees, and the people of Waterloo Region.

For more information on Opportunities 2000, or what you can do to help reduce poverty in Waterloo Region, please contact Opportunities 2000 staff at:

35 Dickson St.  
Cambridge, ON  
N1R 7A6  
Tel: (519) 623-9383 ext.100  
Fax: (519) 740-8540  
Email: [op2000@lwdcoda.org](mailto:op2000@lwdcoda.org)  
Web: [www.op2000.org](http://www.op2000.org)

or

86 Ardelt Ave.  
Kitchener, ON  
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