

Focus on wellness pays off

Jordan Engineering shining example of healthy organization

BY DR. LISA M.S. BARROW

Jordan Engineering is a small company but its employees have a big mindset!

So says company CEO and founder Sandra Murre and it's not hard to see why. The nine-year-old company has experienced a remarkable 30 per cent growth in revenue for each of eight consecutive years — an achievement Murre directly attributes to the enthusiasm and dedication of employees.

Jordan Engineering is a Niagara-based team of engineers and computer professionals who provide industrial software solutions to sectors ranging from pulp and paper to chemical compounding to power generation.

Fit employees, fit company

As part of its ethical, values-based approach to doing business, Jordan Engineering also goes beyond the level of most organizations in actively supporting the physical health of its employees.

At the workplace, the company daily provides milk and fresh fruit for employees, as a way of encouraging healthier food choices. To support employees in becoming more active, the company has had each employee custom fitted with running shoes! Plus, if employees join the local YMCA, Jordan Engineering pays half of the membership.

Recognizing that healthy employees make for a healthy organization, some staff members ride their bicycles to work while others walk or swim during their lunch breaks. Outside of work, employees participate in triathlons on an annual basis. Setting a good example, Murre herself participated this fall in the CEO Challenge of the Subaru Muskoka 70.3 ½ Iron Man, which includes swimming 2 kms, biking 90 kms and running 21.1 kms.

Employees are also involved in fundraisers such as the 200-km Ride to Conquer Cancer, a cycling journey from Toronto to Niagara Falls, for which they recently raised \$35,000!

In encouraging its employees to become more active, Jordan Engineering partners with other community organizations that also promote a healthy lifestyle. For example: YMCA Niagara through membership reimbursements; Runner's Den Waterdown through running shoes and a fitness promotion/injury prevention talk; and the Subaru triathlon series, through race entry reimbursements, a staff group event and company picnic.

Health brings wealth

In today's highly competitive global marketplace, it makes good business sense to ensure that Canadian companies are healthy and performing at their greatest potential. Jordan Engineering, through making health and wellness a priority, has experienced an array of business payoffs — payoffs other organizations could also enjoy by launching similar health and wellness initiatives.

Compared to expected levels without organizational and employee health as a priority, Murre says, Jordan Engineering enjoys:

- Higher profits and a stronger competitive position;
- Better employee performance and quality of work;
- Happier, healthier employees and lower turnover rate;
- Improved customer satisfaction;
- Increased business opportunities; and
- Stronger relationships with clients and vendors.

As well, the culture at Jordan Engineering is one of collaboration, open communication and trust; and a healthy balance exists between the needs of clients, vendors, employees and the community.

Sound pretty wonderful? It is! By achieving synergy in each of its relationships, and by actively promoting the health of its employees, Jordan Engineering has created a healthy organization — one that Niagara can be proud of and that other organizations across the region and country can emulate.

Congratulations to Jordan Engineering for demonstrating to all of us just how healthy an organization can be!

Dr. Lisa M.S. Barrow is owner of LMSB Consulting, which provides strategic direction for organizations seeking to strengthen their competitive position and enhance their growth potential. For more information, visit www.lmsbconsulting.com

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How to build a healthy organization

No matter where your organization is on the health spectrum — in good shape, just ok or failing — you can take steps to make it healthier. Here are tips from chemical engineer Sandra Murre, CEO of Jordan Engineering:

1. Identify someone at the workplace to champion healthy workplace initiatives.
2. Involve employees on all levels and value their input. Inclusion is key.
3. Partner with other organizations seeking to create healthier workplaces.
4. Promote health and wellness via emails, bulletins, newsletters, etc.
5. Actively support health and wellness events.
6. Create a business advisory cross-functional committee to determine health and wellness policies.
7. Regularly celebrate the efforts and accomplishments of employees.

And one final tip, this one especially for leaders: Lead by example *and* by spending money to support health and wellness initiatives.