

Nomination - Personal Development for the Workplace

Vecima recognizes that it is not enough to train employees on the day to day functions of the job, but that in order to ensure our ability to retain employees and grow as a company, we need more. Leadership, communication and teamwork are as critical to our success as any of the technical and manufacturing skills that we already train our employees in. In addition, we employ a large number of people for whom English is a second language. We also employ people from all different backgrounds and education levels. For this reason workplace literacy was also an issue we felt it was important to address in our training programs.

We are a rapidly growing company, and to keep up with that growth it is essential for us to be able to promote from within. In order to do that we must be able to provide all of the training opportunities we can to develop the best possible leaders.



When looking at how we would achieve this goal we started an in-house training program to teach these skills. It quickly became obvious that other organizations had a far greater expertise in these areas than we did and so we sought out those organizations to see what assistance they could provide.

We initially contacted READ Saskatoon for information on dealing with ESL and literacy issues. After meeting with us and hearing what our goals were, they quickly recommended bringing in Radius Community Centre to address the workplace essential skills and in turn Radius encouraged us to look at partnering with Can-Sask to develop this program.

Goal:

The goal is to develop a strategy that brings together business, community organizations and government to develop and implement a training prototype that addresses employee recruitment, retention and advancement. This prototype will be transferable and made available to other Saskatchewan businesses.

Objectives:

1. To establish a partnership that brings together Vecima Networks Inc., READ Saskatoon, CanSask Career & Employment Services and Radius Community Centre

2. To develop an onsite training centre at Vecima Networks Inc.
3. To use Radius WorkSMART for off-site skill development
4. To develop a portfolio-based assessment tool that assists employees to identify, enhance and display their employability and training program successes.
5. To show that a training centre is an effective strategy for employee recruitment, retention and advancement.
6. To provide training and employment opportunities for workers in the electronics manufacturing sector



Vecima Networks, a local electronic manufacturing company employing over 850 people, has taken the philosophy of “growing your own” to a new level. Over recent months, we have collaborated with Radius Community Centre, READ Saskatoon and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour through Canada-Saskatchewan Career & Employment Services, to address our employee recruitment, retention and advancement issues.

CanSask is a provincial government organization that spearheads and directs employment training and employee engagement in the province. Working with the partners, they have helped with the development for this program.

Radius Community Centre is a non-profit community based organization that has been providing employment-training programs in Saskatoon since 1970. Radius has offered services to a diverse clientele over these years, successfully responding to and meeting the employment needs of the Saskatoon community. Common elements in programming included supports for job search skills, job management skills, workplace literacy and hands on support in the connection to the employer community.

READ Saskatoon is a volunteer literacy organization that has been providing free literacy services to adults and families in Saskatoon for the past twenty-eight years. Their vision is to help create a community that values literacy and is busy doing that with many programs around the city.

With funding from Career and Employment Services, these organizations are piloting a workplace learning centre. A full-time coordinator, hired and supervised by Radius Community Centre, delivers workshops to all new employees on both day and evening shifts. This training program is a



series of workshops designed to promote a healthy work environment and is directed at personal development in the workplace. One part-time literacy coordinator hired and supervised by READ Saskatoon uses her experience in adult and family literacy to provide workshops and direct learning opportunities that address the holistic needs of the employees. The drop-in centre allows employees, during off-hours, access to READ Saskatoon tutors and for the development of individual learning and training plans for employee advancement.

The program will be delivered to all new employees at Vecima and extended to existing employees as well.

This series of workshops is designed to address the following topics.

1. Learning Styles

Through completing a personal inventory participants will determine their two strongest learning styles and chose one learning style they would like to develop and set up a plan to do so.

2. Personality Styles

Participants will complete a personal inventory that will help them determine their personality style. Participants will then highlight their strengths and develop a strategy to work on an element of their personality they may perceive as a weakness.

3. Developing Career Goals – Identifying Personal Career Paths at Vecima

Participants will study mock-up job descriptions of the various positions at Vecima and decide in which job they would be successful, based on the personal research they have completed.

4. Values and Goals – Achieving Balance

Participants will explore their values and roles, helping them determine the areas of their lives that have balance, and explore routes to achieve balance in those that do not.

5. Stress Management – Healthy Lifestyles – Goal Setting

Participants will define stress and determine its causes and effects, both generally and personally. Setting personal goals to help alleviate stress from their lives, they will



develop an understanding of the SMART (Specific, Meaningful – Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timed) goal setting formula.

6. Communication I

Workshop will define elements of clear communication, giving and receiving feedback and active listening, taking into consideration cultural diversity and different backgrounds.

7. Communication II

Getting your point across effectively, thinking win-win and respecting others are some aspects of this communication workshop.

8. Time Management and Organization

Exploring the concepts of prioritizing and “putting first things first”, setting personal goals to address time management and organization situations in their own lives.

9. Decision Making – Team Building

Reviewing the practical elements of decision making and practice these techniques through a series of group activities that present situations that require the development of plans. These activities also address the concepts of communicating in a team setting.

10. Business Etiquette – Personal vs. Professional Style (Essential Workplace Skills)

Addressing the Essential Workplace; Personal Management Skills (Demonstrating Positive Attitudes and Behaviors, Being Responsible, Being Adaptable, Learning Continuously, Working Safely); Teamwork Skills (Working with Others, Participating in Projects and Tasks).

11. Portfolio Building and Evaluation

The series of workshops will generate 6 portfolio pages for the participants' portfolios:

Participants will conduct a personal evaluation of their participation in the workshop series.

Participants will complete an evaluation of the workshop series.



All Vecima employees have been made aware of the program through an internal announcement held in February, as well through brochures and emails. In addition a public announcement outlining the program was made in April. Many of our supervisory staff attended the program initially so they would have a greater understanding of the benefits to their staff and to give them the ability to promote the program to others.

All new employees will be scheduled into the program during their first few months of employment as part of their New Hire training program. In addition the program will also be available to all existing employees during normal work hours. All facilities and materials will be provided by Vecima. One of the goals of this pilot project will be to ensure that the Vecima in-house training staff is able to sustain this program once the pilot project has been completed in June.

In addition to the Personal Development for Workplace, we are looking for ways to support Vecima's employees outside the workplace.

During the day a drop-in center will be open from 2:30 to 4:30 in the Vecima Learning Center. All interested staff will be able to visit this center before or after their shift for

free information and learning opportunities. A couple of times a week we will be offering workshops on a variety of topics and we need you to help in identifying the topics of interest.

At the end of the project READ Saskatoon and Radius Communication will go through a formal evaluation process in keeping with other similar projects they have done in the past. We are also doing an ongoing evaluation among the employees, asking for their feedback on the program and how they feel it can benefit them. Some of that employee feedback has been used on our brochure to further promote the program to our employees. (see our Accountability Framework document and Learning Center brochure)

To date 25 new employees have accessed the program as well as 58 existing employees (28 of them supervisors). We have plans to provide the program to an additional 50 people (combination of new hire and existing) between May 1 and June 15, 2008.