

Staffing Solutions For Small Business!

It is that time of the year when many Canadians are on vacation. However, you are a small contractor and you don't get any time off because you have tons of work on your desk and what little time you have to spare is spent worrying about your estimator who is threatening retirement. How can he leave you? In all likelihood he has been around for the past 20 years. What will you do when he finally leaves, and let's face it, we can be almost 98% certain that your estimator, project coordinator or project manager is a "he" and not a "she"?

Here is some food for thought:

Try looking at all the online job banks across Canada and enter the search term "estimator" or "quantity surveyor". You will find that every major or minor construction company in every Canadian province, from British Columbia to Nova Scotia, yes, even Nova Scotia, is looking for estimators/quantity surveyors – and project managers. There are job postings by major recruiting companies, usually hired by large construction companies to find the best and the brightest. Now here you are, a small family-owned business, how will you be able to find your next generation of construction professionals?

It is likely that you appreciate your estimator/project manager and you make sure he gets a decent salary. Otherwise, he can go to your competitor who has been out scouting the territory because his estimator/project manager is retiring. You might even bring your estimator coffee and doughnuts in the morning to keep him happy, because he is the rarest of species right now in all of Canada, he is a Cana-

dian-born and raised construction professional.

If you are losing your guy, you have several choices: you can try and recruit your competitor's estimator which will make your competitor foam at the mouth and your new estimator smile as she/he just got a salary hike of about 10K. However, this scenario will keep you on edge because what happened to your competitor could happen to you.

Another alternative is to contact the colleges in your area and hire one of the recent graduates, which your competitor probably also thought about. You will get an excellent candidate to provide hands-on training to – this candidate has many job offers and can certainly take his or her pick – now we are getting some "hers" also.

Or you could try another popular strategy – just wait and see what happens! After all, construction is a volatile industry.

But, imagine the following scenario: You are a forward-thinking and innovative construction contractor and you hire a foreign-trained construction professional. What you will get is a motivated individual with a university education and the drive to succeed, somebody who will be loyal, learn fast, is flexible and can adjust to a new environment really quickly. After all, these construction professionals from Sri Lanka, Iran, Pakistan and the Philippines to name but a few, are in Canada, but they are employed as sales clerks at an electronics store or as supervisors of a cleaning crew because

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they are not going to sit around and do nothing. All the while their excellent skills, with many years of practical work experience, are lying dormant. Okay, their building experience comes from “away”, it is not Canadian, but why not do some skill mining. Why not look at their education and experience closely and find out what benefits these individuals can bring your business. Why not utilize the skills that they have acquired in Bahrain, Dubai and Korea or Mexico and transfer them to your business and your specifications.

These will be dedicated professionals who can add value to your company, maybe not in the initial three weeks, but

definitely within three months. In fact, before you know it you will be bringing your new estimator or project manager coffee and doughnuts in the morning because they keep your business strong and healthy.

BCCA has several STEP initiatives which could help you find HR solutions. The ISTEP program has placed more than 600 landed immigrants in the construction industry. EUSTEP has placed more than 130 foreign-trained trades people with BC employers. For more information on BCCA’s STEP initiatives please visit our website at www.bccassn.com or call the BCCA office: 250-475-1077.

Standard Documents Being Updated

As a result of the publication of the new CCDC 2, 2008 there is a concurrent update being undertaken to the Standard Documents and Guidelines for a Stipulated Price Bid for use on Publicly Funded Building Projects in the Province of British Columbia. The updated document is being released under the care of the newly formed British Columbia Documents Committee (BCDC), signifying its document numbering as BCDC 2, 2008.

This update to the existing document, which was published in 2004, is being endorsed by the BC Construction Association and the Architectural Institute of BC and was completed in consultation with the BC Documents Committee, which consists of public owner representatives, design professional representatives from the Architectural Institute of BC, Consulting Engineers of BC and contractor representatives from BC Construction Association.

It is anticipated that BCDC 2, 2008 will be available in July/08 and will be downloadable, like its predecessor document, on the website of the Public Construction Council of BC (www.pccbc.com, under Documents).

A desire to create a seamless standard document, which lends itself to fair distribution of the risk in the bidding/contracting process, is what led to this somewhat unique collaboration and outcome. The document is complementary to CCDC 2 (2008) and includes some BC Standard Supplementary Conditions. The ‘Front End’ (Instructions to Bidders and Bid Form) part of the document reflects much material drawn from the CCDC-23 (2005)

For additional information on the BCDC 2, 2008 document contact the BC Documents Committee through the Public Construction Council of BC at pccbc@pccbc.com.



BC CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

210-174 Wilson St., Victoria, BC V9A 7N6

Phone: 250-475-1077

Fax: 250-475-1078

Email: bcca@bccassn.com

The mission of the BCCA is to provide leadership and excellence in the representation of and service to British Columbia’s construction industry