

Best Employer- Jack Lee Dayton and Knight Consulting Engineers

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HOW do you attract, retain and inspire staff? North Vancouver-based consulting engineers Dayton and Knight seem to have discovered an answer. Founded in 1965, today Dayton and Knight have a staff of 70 employees and a new location on Harbourside Drive in North Vancouver. Managed by four senior engineers, each actively participating full time on the firm's many projects, the company's focus on the human side of their business is key to their success.

Their diverse team comes from many cultures, bringing together a variety of experiences from around the world and contributing a host of innovative approaches to problem solving. This creative collaboration helps build an environment of respect and trust where all employees

feel valued, and it starts the first day on the job.

"We've created a four page checklist so when a new employee comes in we assign them a buddy and the buddy checks things off, including where the washrooms are, where the coffee machine is, who to see about travel arrangements," says Jack Lee, Dayton and Knight's Chief Operating Officer. "After a week that the individual's here, they go for lunch with their buddy and another individual from the office just to make sure everything's going okay. The company picks up that meal tab."

As well as welcoming new staff, retaining staff comes from creating a corporate culture that values participation and recognizes service.

"The challenge for us is not only to attract staff but also staff retention," says Lee. "We find it's not just about money. We invest a lot into staff training. With

the technology changing nowadays we invest about \$4-\$5 thousand on average, including the employee's time, per staff per year on training."

"We have a social committee that tries to organize something every month or maybe every six weeks to try to make the group not just work related," says Chief Financial Officer John Boyle. "We've also implemented a system here where we give people a lapel pin for years of service. We had our annual Christmas party at the Hollyburn Country Club and our senior draftsman has been here 35 years, so we gave him a watch and recognized his efforts."

A multi-disciplinary service oriented company, Dayton and Knight understands that real service begins at home, and that keeping their employees engaged, challenged and happy is the essential first step to creating happy clients.



PHOTO COURTESY North Shore News

JACK Lee, Chief Operating Officer of North Vancouver's Dayton and Knight Consulting Engineers, accepts the 2006 'Best Employer Award'. Dayton and Knight's focus on employee satisfaction has helped make them an industry leader.