



P.O. Box 33166
Edmonton, AB, Canada T5P 4V8

p (780) 414-6075 f (780) 960-2020

www.littlepotatoes.com

NEWS RELEASE

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No Employee Retention Challenges Here - Local Company Recognizes Diversity, Reaps Rewards -

Edmonton, AB – Alberta's tight labour market is forcing the hand of employers across all sectors every day. Successful employers like The Little Potato Company (LPC) know that the key to employee retention and business growth is innovative thinking and fresh perspectives on 'not just what an employee can do for the company, but what the company can do for the employee.'

A producer and distributor of high-quality small breed potatoes, LPC's operations engine is run by floor personnel from 25 countries speaking almost as many languages. Fostering a sense of 'team' – and the basics of a sound understanding of job requirements – posed a significant challenge, and could have resulted in high staff turnover, decreased productivity, or worse, a workplace accident.

But LPC took these obstacles and turned them into opportunities, developing many innovative programs to help make their immigrant staff feel at home in Canada and on the job. These programs have recently been highlighted on the Employers of Choice website, created by Edmonton Economic Development and Alberta Employment and Immigration. The site is a forum in which employers can share best practices and innovative strategies with regards to common issues facing the labour force here in Alberta.

The company's approach to employee recruitment, integration and retention goes far beyond signing bonuses (though they do offer cash incentives as well). Instead, LPC took a more holistic approach to employee satisfaction, focusing on programs to help them feel at home in Canada, recognize their culture and help achieve a work-life balance.

Some of LPC's innovative programs include producing company manuals and on-site training in an employees' native tongue, partnering with NorQuest college in the development of ESL training offered during the lunch hour, and taking new employees out for a meal at one of their homeland's restaurants to introduce them to their community here in Edmonton. In addition, LPC allowed staff to reach their own consensus to set shift times to give everyone three days off per week, allowing them the flexibility to work a second job if required. The company also adjusts shift times during the winter months to allow employees to be at home more during the season's short daylight hours.

These and many other programs have yielded great dividends for LPC, creating a sense of belonging and family in the workplace for new Canadians looking to put down roots in a new country and community. Company productivity has doubled year over year, staff turnover is almost non-existent, and vacancies that do arise are immediately filled through referrals from other happy employees.

For more information on LPC's employee relations programs and the Employers of Choice website, please visit http://www.edmonton.com/employersofchoice/refine_search.asp?page=1632

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Contact: Jared Tabler, Human Resources Director, P: (780) 414-6075, E: jared@littlepotatoes.com

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