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Acden Creates Leaders Out of Their Employees
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A strong, healthy organization is typically one that offers its employees the opportunity to grow along with a genuine focus on work-life balance.

These are the key propellers to the uplifting success of an organization's people and its future industry leaders.

Acden, a proud Indigenous-owned company, has made the support for the communities it serves woven into the fabric of its organization and provides the same support to its employees.

"Acden has a strong sense of community and encourages teamwork. We promote and foster an environment of collaboration among all levels of staff and throughout the businesses," says Natalie Castro-Gentili, General Manager of Administrative Services for Acden.

Through its diverse group of businesses, Acden has the unique ability to adapt to change and invests in an employee's professional development as well as supports them with personal growth endeavours, she says.

Leaders at Acden encourage their employees to grow and learn regardless of their position with the company. Grayson Flett, an Apprentice Mechanic at Acden Fleet is one employee whose interests were recognized early on, helping him excel in his career.

"I was initially hired by Acden Facilities as a Wash Bay Technician in 2020. When my supervisor saw that I was interested in mechanics and possessed related skills, they offered me a position working directly in the shop," says Flett. "Shortly after, Acden Fleet presented me with the opportunity to join as an apprentice mechanic. I'm currently finishing up my first year and I've already learned so much that I'm ahead of schedule."

Patience is a key attribute when onboarding a trainee. There is nothing more disheartening than attempting to learn but to have a supervisor say, 'oh it's easy' with little to no explanation. Flett explains Acden has been supportive by taking the time to explain how things work from small parts to the final big picture.

"Acden has helped me progress in my career by championing my ambitions and providing opportunities to meet my goals. My supervisors and teammates are always available to answer any questions I have. I like working at Acden because of all the things I'm learning – I soak up as much as I can. It's a great atmosphere, the people are so supportive. We're more than a team, we are a family."

The chain of motivation and happiness in a workplace starts from the top. Through great leaders, come employees who want to come to work, who enjoy what they do and who want to further their skills.

Acden values the ability of its candidates to inspire, support and uplift teams as a priority over their ability to meet every qualification outlined on a job posting, says Castro-Gentili. She explains the right 'fit' for a role is often more important than credentials.

Renelle Marcel, Operations Supervisor at Acden Environment was one of those employees who was able to find her perfect role and grew within the company to become a leader. She says her job may be fast-paced, but a career with Acden is rewarding.

"I started my career journey in 2000 when I was hired as a labourer by Acden Environment. The company supported me in achieving my commercial licence – I was one of the very few females in the industry then," says Marcel.

Marcel moved away from Fort McMurray for almost a decade but instantly applied to work at Acden again upon moving back. Five years later, she was promoted to Operations Supervisor for the Offsites Division at Acden Environment.

“Acden invested in me early in my career. I’ve always felt supported, challenged, and personally valued in every role I’ve had within the corporation,” says Marcel. “I’m proud of being a female supervisor in a male-dominated industry. I’m lucky to have a supportive team where everyone’s unique strengths are celebrated.”

“They continuously strive for overall improvement for their team, champion the strengths of their teammates and ensure that everyone’s contribution matters, big and small.”

Like Marcel and Flett, Kassandra Felix, a Talent Acquisition Specialist with the company says Acden continuously strives to ensure benefits and incentives are thoughtfully implemented to genuinely make a difference for an employee, today and into the future.

“In 2019, I joined Acden as a Talent Acquisition Recruiter. I had just finished my HR Management Diploma and was excited about getting into the field of Human Resources,” says Felix. “This year, I was presented with a promotion to Talent Acquisition Specialist with a focus on attraction and retention. I love that I get to meet so many interesting people in our community, visit beautiful places like Fort Chipewyan and continuously grow with an amazing team of HR professionals.”

“Knowing that my work contributes to the sustainable growth of Acden and the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, makes this job extremely meaningful for me,” says Felix.

Felix, who is one of many on Acden’s Human Resources team, explains how important it is for both Acden and prospective employees to find the right ‘fit’ within the organization, and not just to rely on credentials.

“For an employer (like Acden), finding the right fit is more than qualifications and experience, but what values and positive attributes an individual can contribute to their work environment,” she says.

“For an employee, finding the right fit is identifying your personal and professional needs and goals and matching an organization that will support that fulfilment. Whether it’s career development, training and development funds, or you’re looking for an RRSP matching program, create work-life balance by joining an employer that fulfils those needs.”

Felix says Acden is her employer of choice because of the flexibility she has with the job in addition to their support of her personal growth.

“Acden is an employer that truly cares about you and encourages work-life balance. It’s more than what you do in your spare time. When determining if a workplace is the right “fit” for you, it has to fit your life as a whole both professionally and personally. Work-life balance is about how a job fits with your family and loved ones, your values, and your best interests at that stage in your life,” she says.

As an Indigenous corporation, Acden continues to create movements to advance meaningful change and action truth and reconciliation. Felix says that being a part of that effort has made her develop a lot of pride in her work.

“I am fortunate to get to learn and benefit from the guidance of innovative and inspiring mentors and leaders and I’m proud of what we’re accomplishing as a team.”

Through learning about Acden’s employee success stories, Marcel, Flett and Felix have all become inspired by their leaders and mentors that led them to the direction of their success and they continue to become those very leaders themselves.

Marcel, a supervisor herself, aligns successful leadership with having good nature and patience. “Leaders accomplish a goal by motivating and inspiring people. A good leader will guide, listen and teach,” she says.

Acden is committed to the professional growth of its employees and looks to continue to expand its team with current and future leaders.

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