



City of Moncton

Workplace Literacy Mini Case Study

Overview

The City of Moncton has 12 municipal departments with 600 full- and part-time employees, most of whom work in manual labour positions. Many of the long-term employees were hired prior to the current requirement of a Grade 12 diploma, and an initial needs assessment identified training needs in writing, basic math, reading and computer skills, as well as academic upgrading.¹ In response to a Canada-wide challenge for municipalities to invest in workplace education, and with a joint labour-management committee for guidance, a Workplace Education Program (WEP) began in 1998. The City of Moncton conducts the WEP at its learning centre on a voluntary basis, and always ensures participant confidentiality.

Objectives

The main goals of the WEP are to:

- ⇒ prepare employees for the ongoing challenges of a labour market that requires increased technological skills;
- ⇒ eliminate the stigma of low literacy by highlighting the advantages of enhanced skills;
- ⇒ incorporate, as much as possible, the use of computers in the delivery of courses; and
- ⇒ ensure the complete confidentiality of employee participation.

Activities

To meet the demand for increased technological skills, this innovative program uses computers to deliver all literacy, numeracy, computer, parenting and tax preparation courses. Using computers in a comfortable learning

environment not only increases the employees' computer skills, but also reduces the fears of many employees who have never used this technology. An innovative feature of the program is that it is open to the employees' family members. By working with the employees and allowing family members to upgrade their education, the City of Moncton has contributed to an increasingly educated and involved workforce and community.

Achievements

Through the WEP, employees:

- ⇒ have enhanced their basic computer skills;
- ⇒ can better communicate their ideas and opinions;
- ⇒ have earned several certifications, including General Equivalency Diplomas (GEDs); and
- ⇒ have increased mobility within the company.

Benefits

The rewards of the program include:

- ⇒ increased confidence and self-esteem of employees and their families;
- ⇒ increased employment rate for spouses of City employees; and
- ⇒ improved labour relationships between all the stakeholders.

CONTACT

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¹ Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators. *After the Pilot Projects: Revising the Process*.
<www.camacam.ca>