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Canada's Top 100 Employers: pensions and benefits matter

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The recent economic slowdown forced many Canadian companies into survival mode. But amidst the doom and gloom, a group of far-sighted corporations have focused on weathering the storm and preparing for the future by strengthening their workplaces and ensuring continued employee satisfaction. These organizations have been recognized in the 2011 edition of Canada's Top 100 Employers.

The 11th edition of the annual list, compiled by editors at Mediacorp Canada Inc., recognizes companies that stand out across eight key areas: physical workplace; work atmosphere and social events; health, financial and family benefits; vacation and time off; employee communications focused on how employers capture feedback from their employees; performance management; training and skills development; and community involvement.

Pensions and benefits matter

Innovative employee benefits, pension plan options, and workplace wellness initiatives continue to be a common thread among many of the companies listed. Montreal-based Yellow Pages Group Co. provides employees with a benefits plan featuring 100% employer-paid premiums, and flexible coverage levels and premiums.

The plan, managed by Manulife Financial and Axa, also extends to retirees, depending on age and years of service. The company also offers a defined contribution (DC) pension plan that allows employees to choose from nine pre-determined investment combos or choose their own.

Yellow Pages Group has spent the past year redeveloping their brand identity and accelerating their transformation into the digital space, and Marc P. Tellier, president and CEO, says the company's ability to keep its 2,300 employees happy and engaged has been central to its continued success. "Our employees have been a crucial part of this transformation. They clearly embraced the new Yellow Pages brand positioning, our growth strategy as well as the overall vision for the future of this company," he says.

Bayer Inc. was named to the list for the fourth consecutive year. The company also offers a benefits plan managed by Manulife financial, which offers 95% employer-paid premiums, flexible coverage levels, and full family coverage.

Bayer offers both defined benefit (DB) and DC pension plans, with employer matches of up to 6.8% and 6% of salary, respectively.

And the company's commitment to wellness shows, with a Toronto-based head office featuring an outdoor walking trail, onsite fitness facility, nap room and cafeteria featuring healthy meal options. "Bayer listens to employee feedback and works at improving its programs to better meet employee needs," says Philip Blake, president and CEO.

Richard Yerema, managing editor of the Canada's Top 100 Employers project, says the companies on this year's list understand that maintaining a focus on employee satisfaction is vital no matter the economic situation.

"Despite challenging economic times, we've seen strong interest by employers in maintaining and improving their working conditions for employees," says Yerema. "Many of this year's winners have learned from past economic slowdowns that you can do lasting damage to an organization by scaling back on benefits that are important to employees." To view the complete list of Canada's Top 100 Employers and read about the reasons for their selection, visit www.canadastop100.com.



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