

Help for employers to recruit, retain, and advance women in trades on PEI

by Stacy Dunn

In the summer of 2015, Women's Network PEI began a three-year project called **Supporting Island Trades Employers (SITE)**. Phase 1 is complete, and **Michelle Blanchard** is coordinating Phase 2.

"It's a supply and demand equation," says Michelle. "Our Trade HERizons program has supplied trades women, and now the SITE project is working with trades employers to increase demand. We are looking at their workplace practices and suggesting ways to recruit, retain, and advance women on PEI."

The 12 employers on SITE's advisory board represent companies across the Island, from smaller businesses such as Ridgeline Construction with 10 employees to larger firms such as Holland College and Maritime Electric.

"The project found that employers of all sizes have common concerns. SITE can help small employers which don't have a human resource department to build their own action plans. We help them track their changes and look at their outcomes. The companies seem open to change."

As part of the project, Michelle analyzed participating companies' HR policies and employee orientation manuals. Focus groups were also held with Island tradeswomen.

"Since its start in 2009, Trade HERizons has helped to almost triple the number of tradeswomen on PEI. Yet we are hearing some women feel a sense of isolation because they are the only female in the shop. We have created professional development workshops where they can share ideas. Some of our employer advisors have agreed to sponsor these workshops."

Monthly information sessions with employers will be held on general workplace issues. Employers will also have the opportunity to promote their companies and possibly recruit future employees.

"The knowledge-sharing piece of this project is going to be huge. After we have learned all we can from employers and employees, we will ask how we can best share this information to make workplaces more welcoming. Trades work can be challenging; for example, some women may not be able to do a lot of heavy lifting."

Michelle Blanchard, Coordinator of the Supporting Island Trades Employers (SITE) project.



"I know of one employer who makes sure his female employee is busy doing something else when a heavy delivery comes in."

"I think the SITE project will have a lasting impact on the way PEI trades employers accommodate their employees."

For more information on **Women's Network PEI**, call **902-368-5040**. Visit www.wnpei.org



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How does my employer determine my pay?

submitted by **Detry Carragher, CPHR (CARVO GROUP)**

I can still hear the echoes of Tom Cruise shouting out 'show me the money' from the 1996 movie *Jerry Maguire* or Dolly Parton singing her lively 1980's song 'Working 9 to 5.' We all need money to provide the essentials for things such as food, shelter, and clothing.

One of the biggest challenges for an employer is determining the right amount of pay. Compensation (or pay) strategies will vary, and as this topic is rather complex I'll aim to provide you with a few insights as a starting point only.

How does my employer decide how much I should get paid?

Employers typically consider some, or all, of these factors in designing their pay structures:

1. At minimum, they must ensure they are complying with government regulations such as the Employment Standards Act (for provincially regulated employers) and the Canadian Labour Code (federally regulated employers). PEI currently has the highest minimum wage in Atlantic Canada, at \$11 per hour.
2. They examine the availability of workers with the required skills and analyze what other companies pay for similar jobs. The purpose is to examine the external labour market to determine a "competitive set." Based on these factors, the company will choose to pay higher, lower, or the same amount for the position. This typically only takes into consideration base pay and excludes other forms of possible compensation such as bonuses, shares, and benefits.

3. They base compensation according to a prescribed classification system. Classifications are based on detailed job evaluations to determine the value of a job. Larger organizations, and often unionized workplaces, will adhere to a classification system to determine pay.
4. They will assess their organization's future plans, the performance of the organization, the reputation of the organization, geography, and additional benefits.
5. And finally, great companies ensure their compensation is internally equitable, fair, and free from discrimination (such as age, gender, race, and disability).

Determining an employee's compensation is not a simple task. It is equally important for you to understand the value of your skills so you can participate in the conversation with your employer. Better workplaces are a shared responsibility!

About Detry Carragher

As a Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR), Detry Carragher has led Carvo Group since 2004. The team is consulted regularly by employers, industry groups, and employees from across Atlantic Canada on a range of employment-related topics. Detry's work extends to several of Canada's Top 100 Employers and Fortune 500 technology companies, and she has contributed her insights on CBC, CTV, and the national HR Reporter publication. Detry was recently awarded the prestigious HR Award of Excellence, representing Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. She has offered to share her HR insights with Employment Journey readers.

If you have a specific question you would like featured in the HR Insights column, or you are interested in expanding your skills in human resources, email detry@carvogroup.com. Visit www.carvogroup.com



Detry Carragher, Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR)

