

WORKPLACE

BRIEFINGS

Seven-year deal for Molson Coors

OTTAWA — Unionized workers at Molson Coors Canada in Montreal have voted 75 per cent in favour of the latest contract offer from the company, a seven-year deal that will ensure “stable, generous” working conditions. The deal provides “substantial” departure incentives for employees of retirement age, the company said in a statement, along with enhanced pension and benefits. Workers will receive pay increases of 7.5 per cent over the life of the contract. In addition, 189 substitute employees will become part of the regular payroll with full benefits. “The agreement is consistent with member expectations and offers employees stable, generous working conditions in the years ahead,” said Serge Berube, president of Teamsters Local 1999.

Postmedia News

▶ TOP TIP

Familiarize yourself with keyboard shortcuts for applications you regularly use, such as Ctrl+S to save and Ctrl+P to print to avoid overusing the mouse.

Richard Brownlee, neurosurgeon and director of the Welcome Back Centre in Kamloops on how to avoid musculoskeletal disorders.

▶ BLOG WATCH

The actual personal qualifications required of a model are few. She can have the grace of a water buffalo, the brain cells of an amoeba, and the personality of rabid dying dog — although preferably not all three at the same time — and she can still get work. (Yes, there are names and no, I will not name them.) Attributes such as education, patience, honesty, persistence, integrity, intelligence and humour that are in-demand in every other workplace, are by themselves of no particular value in modelling. This is why people often assume that all models are stupid, because we can be and still work.

Blog post by Paulina Porizkova, Huffington Post

▶ THEY SAID

Working as a door person in a nightclub is one of the more high-risk occupations. There are inherent risks for violence in most nightclub/bar environments. Exposure to violence, in these work environments under the definition of Work-SafeBC regulations (Reg. 4.27) has been shown to include verbal threats, and the risk of injury in the course of controlling customer to customer violence. Direct physical assaults on staff can range from being spat on, liquids/objects thrown, being pushed, slapped, punched or kicked and the possibility exists that weapons could be used against them.

Hugh Pelmore in response to a blog post, Nightclub shooting sparks workplace safety investigation, by Darah Hansen. Read Darah Hansen's blog at www.vancouversun.com/workplace



IAN SMITH/PNG

Recent design grads Josephina Puharich (back left) and Lauren Webb (front left) with Good Space Design Works co-owners Brent Neave and Dwaina Sprague.

NEWCOMERS | No experience? No problem

Employers learn the many benefits of hiring young workers

BY DARAH HANSEN
VANCOUVER SUN

Dwaina Sprague found success as an interior designer, but she hasn't forgotten how discouraging it was to break into the competitive profession. Job prospects were grim when she graduated from the British Columbia Institute of Technology 20 years ago. Employers at the time were looking for experienced designers, preferably with a university degree. Enthusiasm and an artistic flare weren't enough to get a foot in the door. "They [my instructors] told us you are not going to get a job when you leave this program. You are going to be working in a tile store or a wallpaper store or a furniture store," she said. "That really stuck with me all these years." Sprague swore then that if she ever got the chance, she would do her best to give the next generation of talented newcomers a leg up in the business. These days Sprague is making good on that promise. As the proud co-owner of the Good Space Design Group, she's been able to employ several junior designers in her Gastown office, most recently Josephina Puharich, 27, and Lauren Webb, 22. The job gives the women, both recent graduates of design school, hands-on design experience, while keeping salary costs affordable for a small, but growing business. "That's the Nirvana that we sort of imagine in the design world," Sprague said of her

firm's vision. "It's a place where young designers are safe to work and do what they do, but they have some of that guidance in handling the business aspect of it all." In straight business terms, the benefits of hiring young, inexperienced workers are many, according to Juma Wood, a management and talent development expert with Meyers Norris Penny. Employees who come into an organization fresh out of school are often curious, eager to learn and "haven't developed bad habits," Wood said. The newest generation of workers, known as the millennials, also bring with them an invaluable and intuitive knowledge of social media and digital technology, giving companies a competitive edge many are striving for. "The way we organize and communicate has changed and that generation is plugged right into that. They were raised on it," Wood said. If there is a drawback, it's that younger workers today are not as loyal to the company as past generations. "Millennials will always look around for a better opportunity," said Wood. Wood said inexperienced workers are also less likely to be business savvy or "hit the ground running" in the same way a more experienced person might. At the same time, young workers are, more than ever, searching for a greater sense of social purpose or global meaning in their work, rather than simply trying to make money. Companies that are able to

Top tips for students marketing themselves to employers:

- 1. Research:** This doesn't just mean a Google search, although that's a good place to begin. Post-secondary libraries have access to areas of the "invisible web" and can provide excellent background information on sectors or companies that you may be interested in.
- 2. Connect:** Talk to as many people as you can. Set a goal of one contact per day for example. Want a job quicker? Make it two or three. Network. Make connections. LinkedIn is a very important online tool, as are other social media sites, but business cards still have a place in 2011. Keep them with you at all times. Ask for coffee meetings or quick 15-minute connection times, but don't do this until you're prepared.
- 3. Prepare:** What questions will you be asked? What are your answers? Write down top 10 questions you think you might be asked during a social event or sit-down formal interview. Start with, "Tell me a bit about yourself." What is your answer? Verbalize the answer by saying it out loud, using video or a family member to review your answers in a mock interview. You'll be amazed how much better you get on your third or fourth practice session. What is your one-minute answer to "Why should this firm hire me?" Remember, it's about helping the organization meet their goals, not the other way around.
- 4. Keep on learning:** Take classes. Join a webinar. Employers are attracted to busy people who are working hard ... even if they don't have a job yet. "Hmmm, I see that you volunteer your time, and you're taking a course online ... I like that."

Supplied by Randy Friesen, BCIT director of marketing communications

more deeply align with that purpose, whatever it may be, won't have a problem with staff attraction and retention. "They [young workers] will come at you with so much energy, so much willingness. They will just be on-board with everything you want to do," Wood said. Paul Dangerfield, vice-president of education, research and international at BCIT, said students graduating from the school these days are taught more than just a trade or profession.

They also learn what will be expected of them by an employer in the industry of their choosing and bring with them the "latest and greatest" in technology and state of practice associated with that industry. "They may not have the total experience package yet, but they have the energy and education to be able to look at new ways of doing things," he said. Dangerfield said hiring rates post-graduation vary by department and skill demand. However, the vast majority of BCIT

graduates are finding work in their field within the first six months of leaving school. Statistics supplied by BCIT for the 2009/10 school year indicate that 97 per cent of students graduating with a degree found work within that time frame. The employment rate was slightly lower, at 88 per cent, for graduates of apprenticeship programs, while 81 per cent of diploma/certificate graduates found work. Over at the Good Space office, Sprague said she plans to welcome more young workers into the firm as it expands, while giving more of the responsibility for training and mentorship over to the employees she has now. Although the average salary for an industry newcomer is modest, between \$15 and \$25 an hour, Sprague said there isn't any shortage of skilled talent looking for work. A recent job posting by the company for a junior designer attracted more than 70 applications. Webb, a graduate of the Art Institute of Vancouver, landed the role, and couldn't be more grateful for the opportunity to roll up her sleeves and put her education and creativity to good use. "It's really rare to come into a space and actually be trusted and respected. We really work as a team," she said.

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