

Our people

It's a mantra here: CN people make it all work. A powerful franchise, a unique operating model – neither of these is an advantage if our people don't execute properly and consistently. This is why it's a top long-term priority at CN to attract, develop and retain the best and brightest people in the industry.

CN people: key to our long-term future



CN's culture of railroaders is a culture of pride, performance and continuous improvement – people striving to do their work today better than they did it yesterday.

Ultimately, franchises and business models don't drive success. Neither do strategies and initiatives. People do. That's why we see developing people as the most important of our Five Guiding Principles of Railroading (service, cost control, asset utilization, safety and people).

People are why CN has succeeded up to now, and they are the critical element of CN's success going forward. Culture, the collective behaviours of everyone who works here, is key.

Building a culture of performance, one person at a time

At CN, we are in an ongoing process of developing and strengthening our culture. The foundation of this effort is to ensure that everyone knows what CN is striving to achieve and his or her place in it.

A passion for doing things the right way, working as a team, taking the time to mentor others – the human element of what we do is the most important factor in running a safe, high-performance railroad.



To build the right culture, several years ago we created and launched a series of innovative people development initiatives, which include Employee Performance Scorecards (EPS), a tool for conducting consistent, regular, formal performance reviews with all employees, as well as “Hunter Camps” and the CN Railroad MBA, two unique programs to develop effective leaders in railroading.

EPS establishes and maintains an open dialogue between employee and supervisor to enable both to do their jobs more effectively. EPS reviews are individualized, one-on-one sessions, a vehicle for the company to thank employees for their contributions, be clear on what’s expected and discuss their progress, impact on the business

and opportunities to improve and advance. EPS is a critical tool to encourage individual behaviours that support CN success.

Hunter Camps, first begun in 2003, are three-day sessions in which our CEO spends time with a group of about 20 CN management people from across every CN function. In these sessions, Hunter Harrison coaches participants on railroading and leadership techniques in an informal, storytelling format. The Railroad MBA is a tailored 12–18-month program in which select CN senior managers take a leave of absence from their regular jobs to gain hands-on experience in every aspect of CN’s operations.

CN continues to emphasize the right leadership behaviours to support our goal: engaged, committed employees who give their best every day to help the company achieve sustained, long-term success.



Attracting the best and brightest to CN

Another important element of linking CN potential with human potential is recruiting new talent to the organization. This will continue to be a priority as many of our current people approach retirement age.

We have found that nothing attracts top people like success – more and more are seeking to join CN, eager to take part in building the brightest future in railroading and transportation. There’s reason for optimism that our recruitment efforts will be successful: We received more than 50,000 online applications to work at CN, across all trades in Canada and the United States, in 2008 alone.