



# Atlantic Canada's Top Employers 2012

An Atlantic Business Magazine exclusive,  
presented in partnership with Mediacorp

**W**ith all the talk of a double-dip recession and slow economic growth, you might be excused for thinking that employers had gone back to the old days when just having a job was enough for most folks. But the 2012 winners of the fourth-annual Atlantic Canada's Top Employers competition show how serious leading employers are about recruiting and retaining the best employees.

In fact, Mediacorp — which organizes this recognition program as well as Canada's Top 100 Employers — notes that there was a record number

of employer applications this year, 15 per cent higher than last year.

Tony Meehan, Mediacorp publisher, attributes the higher level of interest to the compressed job market. "The reality of Canada's labour market is that the unemployment rate in many key occupations is less than four per cent, even in the current economic climate. This... is bringing many employers to the realization that they need to become more attractive places to work — not just to ensure future growth, but simply to maintain the operations they have now."

**ADMIRAL INSURANCE SERVICES INC.**

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 308

**Who are they:** provider of automobile insurance products and services.

**What makes them great:** support new mothers with maternity and parental leave top-up payments (to 100 per cent of salary for 20 weeks) and parental leave top-up for new fathers or adoptive parents (to 100 per cent of salary for 14 weeks); support professional development with tuition subsidies for courses taken at outside institutions, in-house and online training, subsidies for professional accreditation and a formal mentoring program; contributions to a defined benefit pension plan (to five per cent of salary); a share purchase plan that is available to all employees, and a variety of financial rewards including referral and year-end bonuses.

**ALCOOL NB LIQUOR/ANBL**

**Location:** Fredericton, N.B.

**Number of employees:** 446

**Who are they:** provincial Crown corporation responsible for the purchase, importation, distribution and retail activity of all beverage alcohol in New Brunswick.

**What makes them great:** defined benefit pension plan, defined contribution pension plan, and matching RSP contributions; maternity leave top-up payments to new mothers (to 75 per cent of salary for 15 weeks); flexible work arrangements including reduced summer hours and a compressed work week option; academic scholarship program for children of employees (up to \$2,500); a self-funded leave program that lets employees defer a portion of their salary and take extended time off (up to one year) with pay; supports ongoing education by covering the full cost of tuition for employees completing courses at outside institutions (with no annual maximum).

**ANNAPOLIS VALLEY DISTRICT HEALTH AUTHORITY**

**Location:** Kentville, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 1,031

**Who are they:** providers of health and wellness services to the counties of Kings and Annapolis.

**What makes them great:** new employees start with four weeks of paid vacation allowance, in addition to personal paid days off; subsidies for courses taken at outside

institutions, subsidies for professional accreditation and a variety of in-house and online training programs; new mothers receive maternity leave top-up payments (to 93 per cent of salary for 15 weeks) as well as a variety of flexible work arrangements for when they are ready to return to work; parental leave top-up payments to employees who are new fathers or adoptive parents (to 93 per cent of salary for 10 weeks); retirement planning assistance, generous contributions to a defined benefit pension plan and health benefit coverage that extends to retirees.

**CAPE BRETON DISTRICT HEALTH AUTHORITY**

**Location:** Sydney, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 2,284

**Who are they:** provider of community health services to 130,000 residents of Cape Breton, Northern and Central Inverness County and Victoria County.

**What makes them great:** new employees get personal paid days off as well as three weeks of paid vacation allowance; tuition subsidies for job-related courses (to \$5,000), financial bonuses for some course completion and in-house and online

**FYI Brent Scrimshaw named President & CEO, Atlantic Lottery**



Anna Stuart, vice president, Knightsbridge Robertson Surette, is pleased to have assisted Atlantic Lottery with the appointment of their new President and CEO, Brent Scrimshaw. Brent has been an invaluable part of the Atlantic Lottery team since joining in 2006 as Executive Vice President, Brands and Channels.

A graduate of the University of Western Ontario, Brent has previously worked for the Canadian Football League as Chief Marketing Officer and also enjoyed a successful career with Molson in leadership roles that included Vice President, Marketing for Western Canada and President of its sports and broadcast subsidiary, Molstar Sports & Entertainment.

Sean O'Connor, Chair of the Board of Directors of Atlantic Lottery, said "We are delighted Brent has accepted the invitation to serve as President and CEO of Atlantic Lottery. Brent believes passionately in Atlantic Lottery's social responsibility to all Atlantic Canadians. He is enthusiastic about opportunities to grow our business in areas that are interesting and relevant to Atlantic Canadians."

Please join us in congratulating Brent and wishing him and Atlantic Lottery continued success.



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## Powerful people

According to Mark Surrette, president of leading executive search firm Knightsbridge Robertson Surrette, human resources is in many ways the only competitive advantage an organization has. "Technology can be copied, processes improved upon, flavour replicated, styles enhanced. But nothing can beat a passionate, bright, focused team of employees who want to achieve."

Surrette says service will trump product in almost every situation. And, if managed effectively, he believes the workforce can provide a definite competitive advantage for firms that are savvy and progressive enough to leverage the HR department appropriately.

CBCL Limited received an honourable mention in the human resources category of this year's Corporate Social Responsibility Awards (Atlantic Business Magazine, volume 22, number 6). The company stood out because of its promotion of workplace diversity.

"Essentially, in this day and age, new employees are no longer only looking at the salary being offered," said Amanda Geldart, human resources coordinator at CBCL Limited. "If they choose to work for an employer it's more so because of a package deal, salary is just one aspect."

Geldart said more and more people are looking at the benefits and policies that a company has in place. "Providing a flexible environment is a competitive edge," she said. "If we can provide a more flexible workplace than our competitors, then we will gain access to a better pool of candidates."

Keane Inc., an IT firm located in Halifax, illustrates the key role that human resources plays in determining the survival, effectiveness and competitiveness of Canada's businesses. "We made Atlantic Canada's Top Employer's list this year," said Lianne Landry, senior human resources manager. "I think it may very well be because of the human resource practices we have in place."

Landry said Keane Inc. is ahead of trends in regard to human resources. "Above all, we listen to our employee base and we find that has a direct correlation to the level of our employees' engagement," she said. "If employees are asking to work for a green company or to have an involvement in the social community; we cater to those interests."

Landry said the company tries to accommodate diverse interests within the employee base by putting programs in place and critiquing them constantly to ensure

they measure up with employee interests. "If something is getting low participation or low interest, we find out how it can be improved or we just don't do it."

She noted that it's important for employers to offer perks for work-life balance. She said Keane offers flexible work scheduling like working from home, health and dental benefits, and fitness incentives.

"We make sure we have something for everyone instead of a particular group of people," she said. "That way we have a more diverse staff."

Ultra Electronics Maritime Systems is a company that is currently undergoing a business transformation from a commodity manufacturer to a developer of innovative surveillance and communications solutions.

"To successfully win and execute new projects we needed to dramatically improve our skill base and attract, retain and engage the most creative and driven people," said Paul Reeves, human resources manager. "We quickly realized that to get people on board, we had to create a great place to work."

Reeves said the company was able to attract more people after reviewing and improving compensation, getting creative about benefits (introducing health spending accounts, increasing vacation entitlement, critical illness insurance) and most importantly by aligning working culture to their vision of being a great place to work.

"Our president and management team had to demonstrate this commitment by taking action and by spending more time with the people in the business," said Reeves.

"Examples that stand out are Fireside Chats with the president (where small groups meet to talk openly about issues in the business), our engagement with the local community (both local charities and academia), and most recently we shared our success at being one of Nova Scotia's Top 100 Employers by giving everyone an extra vacation day.

"Our employee survey conducted in September 2011 by an external consultant found 93 per cent of employees enjoy working at Maritime Systems, 91 per cent regard Maritime Systems as a good employer and 90 per cent felt that there was good teamwork," he said.

"We believe that we have demonstrated that human resources can provide real competitive advantage, but only if it is fully integrated into the overall strategy of the organization." — Ashley A. Clarke

training programs; maternity leave top-up payments for new mothers (to 93 per cent of salary for 15 weeks) as well as extended health benefit coverage during their leave; parental leave top-up to employees who are new fathers or adoptive parents (to 93 per cent of salary for 10 weeks); generous contributions to a defined benefit pension plan, retirement planning assistance and phased-in work options to help employees transition out of the workforce.

### CAPITAL DISTRICT HEALTH AUTHORITY

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 6,421

**Who are they:** provider of health services to residents in the Halifax Regional Municipality and western Hants County.

**What makes them great:** unique onsite amenities including a fully-equipped fitness facility with subsidized membership, lounge, quiet room for meditation and reflection, cafeteria with healthy menus, and nap room for employees who need a quick break during the day; maternity leave top-up payments for new mothers (to 93 per cent of salary for 17 weeks) and parental leave top-up payments to new fathers and adoptive parents (to 93 per cent of salary for 10 weeks); partner with Kids & Company to help provide new parents with daycare within a shorter notice period; formal mentoring, in-house apprenticeship and skilled trades opportunities, leadership training and a range of in-house and online training programs; retirement planning assistance, contributions to a defined benefit pension plan, and health benefit coverage that extends into retirement.

### CBCL LIMITED

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 249

**Who are they:** an employee-owned consulting engineering firm that operates in Atlantic Canada.

**What makes them great:** signing bonuses for some employees, profit-sharing available to all employees and generous contributions to a defined benefit pension plan; tuition subsidies for job-related courses, in-house training programs, subsidies for professional accreditation and career planning services; paid time off for employees to volunteer at their favourite charitable organization; compassionate leave top-up payments to employees who are called upon to care for a loved one (to 100 per cent of salary for one week).

**CLEARWATER SEAFOODS LIMITED PARTNERSHIP**

**Location:** Bedford, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 203

**Who are they:** a seafood company that harvests, processes, and distributes shellfish and groundfish.

**What makes them great:** retirement planning workshops, phased-in work options and contributions to a matching RSP plan; tuition subsidies for job-related courses, subsidies for professional accreditation, financial bonuses for some course completion and in-house training programs; depending on the position, employees can take advantage of a variety of alternative work options including flexible hours, telecommuting and shortened and compressed work week options.

**COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF NOVA SCOTIA**

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 23

**Who are they:** the self-regulating body for the province's medical profession.

**What makes them great:** new mothers provided with parental leave top-up payments of 80 per cent for up to 17 weeks

of their leave; new employees start with three weeks of paid vacation, in addition to a one-week shutdown during the Christmas holiday; offers a number of alternative working options, including an earned days-off program; offers a variety of in-house education programs and tuition subsidies for courses at outside institutions.

**DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY**

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 3,278

**Who are they:** a leading post-secondary academic institution serving over 16,500 full- and part-time students.

**What makes them great:** free tuition for employees (up to two credits annually) and tuition subsidies for employees' immediate family members; new parents (including adoptive parents) provided with maternity and parental leave top-up payments, with the amount dependent upon employee group and length of service; great work location situated on 79 acres of landscaped grounds within walking distance to the Northwest Arm, historic downtown Halifax and a wide selection of restaurants and shops; subsidized memberships for employees and retirees (along with

their spouses) to the Dalplex fitness centre, which includes a fully-equipped gymnasium, swimming, racquetball and squash and instructor-led fitness classes; phased-in retirement work options and a defined benefit pension plan.

**DELTAWARE SYSTEMS INC.**

**Location:** Charlottetown, P.E.I.

**Number of employees:** 114

**Who are they:** providers of information technology consulting and software development services, specializing in e-health and e-business applications.

**What makes them great:** variety of in-house and online courses as well as generous tuition subsidies (to \$2,400) for courses at outside institutions; provides new employees with three weeks of paid vacation to start; creates high-technology jobs in Canada's founding city and one of the country's most popular tourist destinations; offers employees paid time off to volunteer with charitable initiatives and supports academic scholarships for local students; encourage employees to save for retirement with a defined contribution pension plan.



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**GUYSBOROUGH ANTIGONISH STRAIT HEALTH AUTHORITY**

**Location:** Antigonish, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 1,251

**Who are they:** provider of healthcare services to residents in Antigonish, Guysborough, the Strait area, Richmond and southern Inverness County.

**What makes them great:** onsite head office amenities include a fitness facility with subsidized membership, employee lounge, quiet room for meditation and religious observance and onsite cafeteria (with healthy and special diet menus); subsidies for professional accreditation, a range of in-house and online training programs, apprenticeship opportunities and a formal mentoring program; new mothers receive maternity leave top-up payments (to 93 per cent of salary for 15 weeks) and parental top-ups provided for new fathers and adoptive parents (to 93 per cent of salary for 15 weeks); retirement planning assistance, generous contributions to a defined benefit pension plan and health benefits coverage that extends to retirees.

**HIGH LINER FOODS INC.**

**Location:** Lunenburg, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 535

**Who are they:** processor and marketer of value-added frozen seafood products, including the High Liner, Fisher Boy, Mirabel, Sea Cuisine, Royal Sea, FPI and Viking brands.

**What makes them great:** contributions to a defined contribution pension plan, retirement planning workshops and phased-in work options that allow employees to gradually leave the workforce; subsidies for tuition and professional accreditation, in-house and online training programs, and in-house apprenticeship and skilled trades opportunities; academic scholarship award program for children of employees who pursue post-secondary education (six annual scholarships to \$2,400); maternity and parental leave top-up payments to employees who are new mothers, fathers, or adoptive parents (to 95 per cent of salary for 12 weeks); alternative work arrangements including flexible hours, telecommuting and reduced summer hours.



The Cape Breton District Health Authority is proud to support its 3,800 employees through:

- Healthy workplace programs
- Leadership development
- Vacation allowance for new staff
- Earned days off program
- Phased in work options
- Alternative work arrangements
- Maternity and parental top-up
- Retirement planning assistance
- Defined benefits pension plan
- Health coverage for retirees



**IMP GROUP LIMITED**

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 3,501

**Who are they:** privately-owned group of companies operating in the aerospace, aviation, airline, healthcare, industrial marine, information technology, hospitality and property development industries.

**What makes them great:** alternative work

arrangements including flexible hours, telecommuting and shortened and compressed work week options; tuition subsidies for courses taken at outside institutions and subsidies for professional accreditation; academic scholarship program for children of employees who pursue post-secondary education (to \$1,500 per child); help employees save for retirement through a defined contribution pension plan, with matching employer contributions of up to five per cent of salary.

**JAZZ AVIATION LP**

**Location:** Enfield, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 4,880

**Who are they:** regional airline serving over 80 destinations across Canada and in the United States.

**What makes them great:** variety of onsite amenities including a fully-equipped fitness facility with subsidized membership, employee lounge, cafeteria (with healthy and special diet menus) and nap room; profit-sharing and share purchase plans available to all employees; tuition subsidies for job-related courses, in-house apprenticeship opportunities, in-house and online training programs and subsidies for professional accreditation; academic scholarship program for children of employees who pursue post-secondary education (to \$1,000 per child); alternative work arrangements including flexible hours, telecommuting, a formal earned days-off program and shortened and compressed work week options.

**JOHNSON INC.**

**Location:** St. John's, N.L.

**Number of employees:** 1,273

**Who are they:** one of Canada's leading insurance and benefits providers, serving over 900,000 members from over 65 branches nationwide.

**What makes them great:** new employees receive paid time off during the holiday season, personal days off and three weeks of paid vacation allowance; matching RSP contributions, retirement planning workshops and phased-in work options; subsidies for tuition and professional accreditation, generous financial bonuses for some course completion, a variety of in-house and online training programs, and mentoring and career planning services; academic scholarship program for children of employees who attend post-secondary institutions (to \$1,500 per child); new parents (including adoptive parents) receive maternity and parental leave top-up payments (to 100 per cent of salary for 17

weeks), as well as extended health benefit coverage during their leave; depending on the position, the company offers a variety of flexible work options, including a 35-hour work week (with full pay), telecommuting and a shortened work week option.

**KEANE, INC.**

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 565

**Who are they:** a U.S.-based IT firm that provides application, infrastructure and business process outsourcing services.

**What makes them great:** tuition subsidies for courses taken at outside institutions (to \$5,250) and a variety of in-house and online training programs; academic scholarship program for children of employees who pursue post-secondary education (to \$5,000 per child); retirement planning assistance, contributions to a matching RSP plan and phased-in work options; variety of alternative work arrangements including flexible hours, telecommuting and shortened and compressed work week options.

**NB POWER HOLDING CORPORATION**

**Location:** Fredericton, N.B.

**Number of employees:** 2,369

**Who are they:** a provincial Crown corporation and public utility that provides electricity to more than 370,000 residents in the province of New Brunswick, Atlantic Canada and along the eastern seaboard.

**What makes them great:** variety of alternative work arrangements including flexible hours, shortened and compressed work week options, telecommuting and reduced summer hours; offers fertility drug treatments through its health benefits plan and provides employees who are new mothers with maternity leave top-up payments (to 93 per cent of salary for 15 weeks) as well as parental leave top-up for new fathers and adoptive parents (to 93 per cent of salary for 10 weeks); operates an onsite daycare facility; subsidies for tuition and professional accreditation, in-house apprenticeship opportunities and online training programs; provides compassionate leave top-up payments to employees who are called upon to care for a loved one (to 93 per cent of salary for six weeks).

**NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CREDIT UNION**

**Location:** St. John's, N.L.

**Number of employees:** 120

**Who are they:** a Canadian credit union with 56 locations across Atlantic Canada.

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## Atlantic Canada's Top Employers 2012

**What makes them great:** generous year-end bonuses and contributions to a matching RSP plan (up to eight per cent of salary); extended health benefits plan for retirees, with no age limit and shared premiums; covers the full cost of tuition for courses at outside institutions (with no annual maximum) and maintains an annual academic scholarship program (to \$3,000) for employees' children; gives new employees three weeks of paid vacation, increasing to four weeks after three years on the job; paid time off for employees to volunteer in the community and manages its own charitable foundation to raise funds for charities across the province.

### **NORTH ATLANTIC REFINING LTD.**

**Location:** Come By Chance, N.L.

**Number of employees:** 505

**Who are they:** a subsidiary of the Korea National Oil Corporation and a crude oil refinery.

**What makes them great:** complete health benefits plan that includes extended coverage for employees into retirement, with no age limit; start new employees with three weeks of paid vacation time, moving to a maximum of five weeks for long-

serving employees; career planning services as well as in-house training initiatives and tuition subsidies for courses at outside institutions; retirement planning assistance along with contributions to a defined benefit pension plan and a matching RSP plan.

### **RÉSEAU DE SANTÉ VITALITÉ**

**Location:** Bathurst, N.B.

**Number of employees:** 4,947

**Who are they:** provider of health care and services to nearly 250,000 people.

**What makes them great:** subsidized memberships to an onsite fitness facility, complete with treadmills, weights, stationary bikes and instructor-led classes; retirement planning assistance, phased-in retirement work options as well as a defined benefit pension plan; new mothers and fathers (including adoptive parents) receive maternity top-up payments; new employees receive three weeks of paid vacation, increasing to a maximum of five weeks for its longest-serving employees and considers previous work experience when setting vacation entitlements for new employees.

### **SPORTSDIRECT INC.**

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 55

**Who are they:** an online media organization for sports statistics and news from a gaming perspective, and publisher of sports gaming site.

**What makes them great:** maternity leave top-up payments for new mothers (to 75 per cent of salary for 17 weeks) and extended health plan coverage during their leave; tuition subsidies for job-related courses as well as subsidies for professional accreditation; financial rewards including signing bonuses for some, bonuses for employees who refer a candidate that is successfully hired by the company (to \$1,000) and year-end bonuses available to all; share purchase plan available for all employees.

### **TECHNIP CANADA LIMITED**

**Location:** St. John's, N.L.

**Number of employees:** 113

**Who are they:** a provider of project management, engineering and construction services for energy and oil and gas industries.

**What makes them great:** financial benefits

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including referral bonuses for some positions, generous year-end bonuses, a share purchase plan as well as matching RSP contributions; support new mothers with maternity top-up payments (to 100 per cent for 24 weeks) as well as a health benefits plan that extends into retirement; new employees get three weeks of paid vacation, increasing to a maximum of five weeks for its longest-serving employees; tuition subsidies for courses at outside institutions, as well as in-house and online training programs.

### TRIHEDRAL ENGINEERING LIMITED

**Location:** Bedford, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 38

**Who are they:** developer of proprietary monitoring and control software applications used in a variety of industrial applications, including water and wastewater treatment, oil and gas, manufacturing, power generation, broadcasting, food and beverage, marine, flood control, and airport baggage handling applications.

**What makes them great:** relaxed work environment, allowing employees to listen to music while working and bring their pets to work when needed; company-wide share purchase plan; tuition subsidies for job-related courses, in-house training programs and subsidies for professional accreditation; new employees get personal paid days off plus three weeks of paid vacation allowance; health plan provides full coverage to employees' family members as well as year-end performance bonuses.

### ULTRA ELECTRONICS MARITIME SYSTEMS

**Location:** Dartmouth, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 153

**Who are they:** defense electronics manufacturer.

**What makes them great:** profit-sharing and share purchase plan available to all employees; new mothers, fathers and adoptive parents receive parental leave top-up payments (to 100 per cent of salary for two weeks) and adoptive parents offered subsidies to help cover the cost of adoption (to \$2,000 per child); tuition subsidies for job-related courses, online training programs and subsidies for professional accreditation; academic scholarship program for children of employees who pursue post-secondary education (to \$1,500 per child); retirement planning assistance and contributions to a matching RSP plan (to 2.5 per cent of salary).

## What makes a top employer?

"The uncontested, number-one reason why people are unhappy at work is bad management," asserts Devin Tremblett, an employee at Tim Horton's in St. Johns. "Nothing has more power to turn a good work situation bad than a bad boss."

"The ideal boss would make me feel like I'm part of a team or family," said Tremblett. "Someone who encourages open communication, who periodically provides ongoing training, who hires internally before externally, who cares about my personal health and fitness, who gives me feedback and who is present."

Tremblett said he's been employed in various work settings with many different types of management. Despite the difficulties associated with working in the fast-food industry, Tremblett said the perks and good management at Tim Horton's make it all worthwhile.

"I go to school at MUN and my boss is very accommodating when it comes to flexibility in my work schedule," he said. "There are also competitive wages, health and dental benefits, comprehensive training, scholarship programs, community involvement (e.g. the annual camp day and the smile cookie program) and it's a team atmosphere." In today's society, people are much more inclined to apply for a position where they've heard good things about management. What does it take to become a "top employer"? Atlantic Business Magazine talked to some award winners to find out.

### Guysborough Antigonish

#### Strait Health Authority (GASHA)

"There are many reasons for GASHA to be selected as a Top Employer in Atlantic Canada," said Carrie MacIsaac, director of human resources. "As a district, we are known for our involvement with new and innovative health programming such as MORE OB (Managing Obstetrical Risk Efficiently) and CREW (Civility, Respect and Engagement at Work)."

"Programs such as MORE OB and CREW provide opportunities for staff to enhance their skills in a peer setting," said MacIsaac. "Furthermore, our senior leadership team take part in 'safety walk rounds' on a regular basis ensuring two-way communication between management and staff."

### Annapolis Valley District Health Authority

CEO Janet Knox believes they were chosen for having top employees: Annapolis Valley Health is a place where workers go to

grow and develop. "We work hard to create a place where people want to contribute to changing the picture of health for the population, build on past learning and create a good vision the future."

Knox said the organization has adapted what is known as the Kouzes and Posners leadership model, which is based on the belief that leadership is not about position, but about behaviour and vision. "This philosophy has been integrated into our mentorship program, professional performance and learning development," she said. "Annapolis Valley Health also offers very competitive wages and good benefits, with a focus on personal development."

### High Liner Foods

"We were recognized for our commitment to our core values of integrity, innovation, involvement and quality," said Susan Russell, manager of employee programs and retention strategies. "Other key components include our high level of engagement with our employees, our track record of profitable growth and ongoing growth strategy, our commitment to community involvement, the long term investment in our employees' careers through our formal training and development program, our commitment to sustainability, our strong corporate culture and our dynamic leadership team."

She said High Liner Foods provides a positive and supportive environment with strong leadership that allows employees within the organization to challenge themselves every day.

### Admiral Insurance

Vice president Alex MacDonald attributes the company's award-winning culture to "the work of everyone pulling together."

"The company made it to the top of the list through offering employees a share in the U.K.-based organization's financial success," said Dee McLean, communications officer for Admiral Insurance.

"As part of Admiral's profit-sharing plan, each employee is an owner being awarded \$3,000 annually in free shares."

McLean said Admiral Insurance provides health coverage from day one, employee development through tuition subsidies, in-house training, compensation for professional accreditation and a mentoring program. They also start all employees at three weeks vacation, increased by one extra day for each year of employment.

— Ashley A. Clarke

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**WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF NOVA SCOTIA**

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Number of employees:** 394

**Who are they:** promoter of safe work practices and the provision of fair benefits to workers.

**What makes them great:** variety of alternative work arrangements, including flexible hours, telecommuting, and a formal earned days-off program; new mothers, fathers and adoptive parents receive parental leave top-up payments (to 93 per cent of salary for 17 weeks) and allows parental leave to be extended into an unpaid leave of absence; tuition subsidies for work-related courses, in-house and online training programs, mentoring, and career planning services; academic scholarship program; retirement planning workshops, contributions to a defined benefit pension plan, and health benefits that extend into retirement, with no age limit. | ABM



**How to apply for next year's Top Employers list:**

Any employer with its head office or principal place of business in New Brunswick,

Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland and Labrador may apply for the Atlantic Canada's Top Employers competition. Employers of any size may apply, whether private or public sector. Employers apply for this competition through the Canada's Top 100 Employers application process (a single application enters employers in both competitions). Apply online at [canadastop100.com](http://canadastop100.com).

Winners are graded by MediCorp in eight areas: physical workplace; work atmosphere and social; health, financial and family benefits; vacation and time off; employee communications; performance management; training and skills development; and community involvement. Employers are compared to other organizations in their field to determine which offers the most progressive and forward-thinking programs.

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