

Sales Beacon Feature Article in the Globe & Mail (April 2018)

Home is where the work is for Sales Beacon staff

“I jokingly tell people that the commute from my coffee maker downstairs to my office upstairs is really hard,” laughs Lesek Demont, director of sales for Sales Beacon Consulting Inc., which manages sales and marketing programs for companies. “The only obstacle in my way is my golden retriever.”

Like almost all other Sales Beacon’s employees, Demont works from her home. The company is almost entirely virtual, with just a small office (in a restored beach house) in the village of Chester, N.S., where, typically, only a handful of people are working at any given time. Demont herself resides in rural Nova Scotia.

Most of her colleagues are also located in small Canadian communities, with a concentration in Atlantic Canada.

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Cynthia Spraggs
CEO

CEO Cynthia Spraggs, who took over the 11-year-old firm in 2011, says she shares the values of those who started the Sales Beacon. “It was people who really wanted work-life balance, who wanted to not commute to an office, to not have to move someplace else for a job. They wanted to stay in and provide opportunities to their small communities.”

Spraggs notes that some employees are avid surfers whose flexibility of hours and work venue allow them to “make



SALES BEACON'S TEAM ENJOYS THE PERKS THAT COME WITH MEETING ANYWHERE

that surf break” near their homes or to travel to Costa Rica for the big waves in winter. She is an avid traveller herself, and has performed her job while in the Himalayas, Bolivia and Bhutan, among other places.

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Many other Sales Beacon employees, 60 per cent of whom are women, enjoy the freedom to spend time with family. That’s the case for Demont, who is the stepmother of two adolescent girls and, in addition to being director of sales, provides services to one of the company’s biggest clients, Cisco.

“I came from a job where I needed to commute at least an hour each way twice a day,” she says. “Being there when the girls get home from school is amazing, especially given that I see them only half the time. It provides a lot of flexibility around being able to take them to their activities or attend things like their daytime choir performance.”

Another boon of working from home, says Demont, is that she’s healthier. “I don’t get exposed to all the colds. People in other workplaces go to the office when they shouldn’t because of the fact that they have only so many sick days.”

Demont studied chemistry and math in university, and then worked for a nutritional supplement company. She cites herself as an example of another Sales Beacon positive: its willingness to “think outside the box” and hire people with

diverse backgrounds. Spraggs maintains that’s how she gets the best recruits.

“Give me a mother of five who has to get the kids up and off to school and coordinate all their after-school activities – unbelievable. I always say it’s the people who organize surprise birthday parties who are perfect for us, because they have a natural organizing talent. I’ve hired a lot of certified project managers without that talent and they just couldn’t adapt to this super-fast, scope-changing, people-wanting-everything-yesterday environment.”

Still, new recruits are put through a rigorous training program of 50 to 70 hours to learn Sales Beacon’s specialized project methodologies. “They come in, they get a mentor,” says Spraggs. “Depending on their experience, it can be three months before they’re finished their initial preparation.” The company pays for their Internet and telecommunications, and it offers tuition subsidies and bonuses for completion of some courses.

Sales Beacon also gives back. When full-time employees don’t have projects on the go, they might be assigned to local non-profits while continuing to earn their salaries.

46	FULL-TIME STAFF IN CANADA
50%	GROWTH IN THE PAST THREE YEARS
21 - 67	AGE RANGE OF EMPLOYEES
80%	OF EXECUTIVE TEAM ARE WOMEN

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