

# CANADIAN retailer

canada's retail magazine

## ORGANIZED RETAIL CRIME

what it costs  
avoid being a target  
how to fight it



CONTAINER  
THEFT



FLEA  
MARKETS



DEBIT & CREDIT  
CARD FRAUD



REFUND  
FRAUD



COUNTERFEITING



SHOPLIFTING  
RINGS



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DIGITAL SIGNAGE | DATA-BASED CUSTOMER SERVICE | SPOTLIGHT ON LOYALTY PROGRAMS

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#### Hiring your first retail store designer

You've developed and sold your business plan and you're ready to take your product or service offering to market. Or maybe you've had initial success and you're ready to grow. All you need is the perfect store and someone to design it. Read on for all the tips you need to find the right designer for your store.

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#### The loyalty question

Loyalty programs, from stamp cards to Canadian Tire money to electronic swipe cards, exist to solicit loyalty from consumers. But are customers loyal today? The answer seems to be yes, sometimes.

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Digital signage is the hottest new communication medium and retailers and customers alike are giving it rave reviews. Promote your products, train your staff and cut the visual confusion in your store while adding extra punch.

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#### Organized crime hitting retailers hard

It is estimated that organized crime costs Canadians \$5 billion every year, with a good chunk of that coming from retail. It rears its ugly head in many ways: shoplifting, container theft, counterfeiting, flea markets, refund fraud and the use of fraudulent credit, debit and gift cards and is on most retailer's minds.

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#### Partners against crime

Plastic money makes shopping easy for retailers and consumers. It also makes it easy for criminals to access and empty a customer's bank account. Learn how to protect your business with "Project Protect," an effort being mounted by police forces, Retail Council of Canada and payment card companies to reduce the incidence of credit and debit fraud.

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Illustration by Tad Majewski.

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Retail Council of Canada is partnering with community organizations such as Gateway Cafe to broaden the reach of its retail designation program and support youth in need of quality employment opportunities.



# A gateway to retail jobs

Several months ago, Ana Mejia was working at a Value Village store in Toronto, pricing used clothing and hanging it on racks. She was interested in working more with customers and learning other aspects of the retail business, but she had no experience to offer an employer.

Through her mother, Mejia heard about a retail training course that was offered in partnership between Gateway Cafe, a not-for-profit community centre in Toronto, and Retail Council of Canada (RCC). Mejia enrolled and graduated from the course, which included classroom instruction and hands-on retail work experience, and is now working at Once Upon A Child, a store that buys and sells used clothing, toys and other merchandise for children.

"I learned all the basics of retail — everything from how to work with customers and manage inventory, to how to set up displays and even how to manage difficult people," says Mejia, 21. "I know I got the job because I had taken the course and had some real experience. This is a great opportunity for me. I want to stay in retail and one day become a manager."

Gateway was established in 1998 to provide employment sup-

port and services to adults and youth in the Greater Toronto Area. With financial support from the federal government and in partnership with RCC, Gateway launched a program using RCC's retail training courses in January of this year.

The partnership was a natural fit for both RCC and Gateway. "Getting involved in the retail sector was a logical choice for us because it hires a lot of young people," says Gateway Director Diana Gatti. "The program has been really successful. The students learn the skills they need and the employers are very happy because they get trained people who are motivated and committed to working in this sector."

It's a natural fit for RCC as well, says Director of Education, Andrew Siegwart. "Our members benefit, the community benefits and more people are learning about the diverse career opportunities available in the retail industry."

RCC provides training workbooks and facilitator's resources as well as the assessments required for students to earn their designations. Gateway is responsible for delivering classroom training at its offices.

## PROACTIVE RECRUITMENT REQUIRED

Canadian retailers need to be more proactive in their recruitment of employees and exploit the potential of new recruiting techniques such as the Internet, a new survey has found.

The *2006 Retail Recruitment Survey*, conducted by Retail Council of Canada, RCC's Quebec-based partner, Conseil Québécois du Commerce Détail, and Monster Canada, found a shortage of labour is driving up wages in the retail sector, making it more difficult for retailers to find skilled help, particularly for leadership positions such as store managers.

"What this study has revealed is that there is a need for retailers in Canada to take a much more proactive approach to recruitment," says Andrew Siegwart, RCC's Director of Education. "There is a great opportunity for them to leverage what they already know about multi-channel marketing and apply it to their recruitment efforts."

The survey found that large retail chains tend to put responsibility for store-level hiring on local store managers. Unfortunately, these managers are generally not trained in human resources and tend to resort to passive recruiting strategies such as word-of-mouth referrals, help wanted signs and local newspaper advertising.

Retailers surveyed are open to new recruitment strategies but seem reluctant or unable to take full advantage of the recruitment and processing capabilities of the Internet.

The survey of more than 100 Canadian retail industry employers said ambitious retailers may want to consider the following recommendations to build a more sophisticated recruitment strategy:

- > Corporate offices, which are usually the main centres of human resource intelligence in retail organizations, should lend more support to recruitment activities at the store level.
- > Retailers must use proactive recruitment techniques such as the Internet for more than just posting job searches. The Internet is a valuable tool to search resume databases, provide online screening to pre-qualify candidates, and generally track, store and process applicant data and begin creating a proactive recruitment plan.
- > Small, independent and specialty retailers, which feel the pressure of labour shortages and wage inflation more than other retailers, also need to cultivate an active recruitment process. This involves searching the market for talented staff, building training and incentive programs, using human resource tools to screen candidates, and developing a store culture talented employees will search out.
- > The survey found that retailers of all sizes and categories need to place a greater emphasis on retaining staff. They must show employees that career paths are available and educate them for positions in store management.



Retail Council of Canada members can access the complete survey report at [http://members.retailcouncil.org/it/whitepapers/rcc\\_monster\\_cqcd\\_recruitment.pdf](http://members.retailcouncil.org/it/whitepapers/rcc_monster_cqcd_recruitment.pdf).

- T.B.

The course consists of 11 days of classroom study and 72 hours of hands-on work experience with a retailer. Gateway pre-screens all candidates for their suitability and commitment to retail. There are usually 10 to 15 participants in each course which covers topics such as professionalism, customer service and sales, inventory, store appearance, security and safety, and communication.

The cost of the course is paid for by Service Canada's Youth Employment Strategy and is free for students and employers. About 120 students are expected to graduate by the end of 2006.

Gateway also offers students employment counselling, free use of computers and access to online job sites, photocopying and faxing, vocational assessments, help with writing resumes and cover letters, other job-related resources, and even free tea and coffee.

Besides providing the training materials for a fee from its program, RCC has offered other support for the Gateway project. "Specifically, [RCC has] promoted the program to [its] members to generate placement opportunities for our participants," says Gatti. "They've offered letters of support to Service Canada to ensure project funding and work closely with us administratively to make the certification process more accessible to our participants."

Graduates have been placed with a variety of both small and large retailers, including Canadian Tire, Home Depot, Food Basics, The Brick, West 49, Thyme Maternity, Sony and Le Château.

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Logistic - Warehouse  
Inventory  
Security  
Visual presentation  
Sales  
Assistant  
Store Manager  
Associate  
Merchandising - Allocation  
Customer Service  
Drivers  
Cashier  
Loss prevention  
Shipping - Receiving

**Retail Job.ca™**

The reference site entirely  
dedicated to  
**job offers in retail**

## RESOURCES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Retail Council of Canada has a database of resources about employment and recruitment opportunities in the retail industry in Canada.

- > **Employers** can check out information on RCC's Retail as a Career initiative, certification and training programs, scholarship program, recruitment and staffing resources for employers, and other tools.
- > **Students and career seekers** can access links that answer the most commonly asked questions about retail and the industry in general, information about retail education programs, retail facts and other career services.
- > **Educators** can obtain material on certification and training programs, scholarship program, links to related sites, and presentations and speeches promoting retail as a career.

RCC also maintains lists of employment service agencies across Canada which can be helpful resources.



For more information, go to [www.retaileducation.ca](http://www.retaileducation.ca) or contact Andrew Siegwart, Director of Education, Retail Council of Canada, (416) 922-0553, ext. 248; e-mail [asiegwart@retailcouncil.org](mailto:asiegwart@retailcouncil.org).

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"It's a really good program because it gives us the opportunity to try out new employees and see if the fit is right and there is a good match," says Amrick Autwal, a District Supervisor with Le Château, who has hired three graduates. "They do everything that all our sales associates do such as sell, help merchandise and stock. They have all been very open and eager to learn and really want to work."

Gateway conducts employer and employee surveys following employment to determine how well the project is working. Gatti says about 70 per cent of students gain employment three months after graduation.

RCC is equally enthusiastic about this program and partnership. "Working with Gateway has helped us to broaden the reach of our retail designation program and is providing our members with access to trained and enthusiastic new employees," says Siegwart. "Most importantly, RCC is proud to be helping support youth in need of employment opportunities and to provide support to the community."

With looming labour shortages and employment challenges in the years ahead, this project also serves as an example of creative partnership development that retailers themselves can engage in to recruit new employees and at the same time, make a difference in their community. RCC plans to work with similar partners across Canada to develop more programs to continue to improve access to quality retail education. 

## Training Programs

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