

“Train people well enough so they can leave, treat them well enough so they don't want to.”

- RICHARD BRANSON



MENTORING

A great way to successfully build your company



COMPANY:

Jackson & Associates Ltd.

LOCATION:

Courtenay, BC

YEAR ESTABLISHED:

1980

SERVICES:

Full range of residential, commercial and industrial appraisal services

OF STAFF: 9

OF AACIS: 3

OF CRAS: 2

OF CANDIDATES: 1

For **Dan Wilson, AACI, P.App. Fellow**, former president of the Appraisal Institute of Canada (AIC) and president and owner of Jackson & Associates Ltd., recruiting Candidate Members, helping them develop into professional appraisers, and retaining them as key components of his permanent staff is a business model geared for success that he readily puts into practice. In the last 10 years, Dan has mentored four Candidate Members, two of whom are part of his current team.

Gains outweigh the risks

“I see mentoring as one of the most positive business strategies that an appraisal firm can undertake,” says Dan. “Not only are you helping someone to develop his or her professional skills and to establish a career, you are also enhancing your company with an individual who could well become a

committed team member for years to come.”

Depending upon unforeseen circumstances, Dan knows that there is no guarantee a Candidate Member will stay with an organization for the long-term. One of his Candidate Members moved away when her spouse accepted a job opportunity elsewhere and another joined BC Assessment when the economy experienced a downturn in 2008 and the fee appraisal business was adversely affected. While those situations can and do arise, Dan steadfastly believes that the potential rewards in taking on a Candidate Member far outweigh any perceived risks of that person not staying with you.

The experience makes you better

“Hiring a Candidate Member and spending time to mentor them is a positive experience for all concerned,”

says Dan. “When you hire a seasoned appraiser, you have to adjust to their style and approach. With a Candidate

Member, you are getting someone with youthful energy and fresh ideas. You can work with them to ensure that the various steps in an appraisal project are being done the way you like to see them done. And by taking the time to thoroughly explain things to the Candidate Member and to answer their questions, you become a better appraiser yourself. In actual fact, you learn from them.”

Dan comes by his commitment to the mentoring process and the style to make it work from personal experience. When he entered the profession, he was guided through the designation process by Bill Jackson, AACI, P.App, who was the founder of the appraisal company that Dan now owns. According to Dan, “Bill was very hands-on every step of the way. From selecting properties

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and researching data to interviewing people and writing reports, he worked closely with me to make sure I was doing things correctly. I try to do the same with the Candidate Members we bring on.”

Payback for time invested

If the mentoring process is seen by some as being too time consuming, Dan is quick to point out that the time commitment is front-end loaded, with the payback down the line well worth the investment. He estimates that it is the first six months where he spends a significant amount of time accompanying Candidate Members on inspections, helping them with their research, and reviewing their work. After that, the Candidate Members become much more independent and require diminishing amounts of supervision. While being there to answer questions and share information and experiences never really stops, the payback on the early investment of time is considerable when the Candidate Member becomes a fully accredited appraiser working as an integral part of your company.

Hiring the right person

“A key to making it all work is to conduct the proper due diligence before teaming up with a Candidate Member,” says Dan. “Obviously, since you will be spending a significant amount of time with the person, there needs to be a good fit from a personality perspective. You also do a thorough review of a prospective Candidate Member’s educational background, work experience and writing style. But there is much more to it than that. I look for individuals with a strong work ethic who I feel can work both independently

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and as part of a team. I look for people who are open to new ideas, who ask a lot of questions, and who demonstrate a genuine desire to learn. Because they will have to work directly with our clients and our staff, I also want to know that they get along with people and treat them with respect. Oh yes, and being a self-starter is a door opener as well.”

When it comes to the importance of being a self-starter, Dan recalls a situation where he had multiple applications to fill a Candidate Member position he had open. He ended up giving the job to an individual from British Columbia who had travelled all the way to the AIC Annual Conference in Halifax to learn more about the profession and to introduce herself to appraisers from across the country... Dan included. “I remembered meeting her and being impressed that someone would show that kind of initiative to make inroads in her desired career,” says Dan. “I was quite confident she would succeed.”

“There are definitely challenges to meet and personal commitments to make,” says Dan. “But I wholeheartedly recommend mentoring a Candidate Member to other appraisers and other appraisal companies. I have gained more personally and professionally than anything I have given, and I now have professional peer relationships with these individuals that I truly value.” 🇨🇦