



Flex hours and a mentorship program are among the many perks offered at MaJIC. (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

MaJIC

By LAURA GREGORINI
for Northern Ontario Business

The Materials Joining Innovation Centre, or MaJIC, in Kirkland Lake is a non-profit organization conceived out of Northern College's School of Welding Engineering Program with a mandate to develop expertise and solve industry's joining materials problems.

Officials from the school program that focuses on the science, engineering and technology behind welding developed the concept for the organization in 2001. Since then MaJIC has secured both government and private funding to allow its staff of eight to utilize the latest technology, welding and laboratory equipment to meet the challenges of small to medium businesses.

To date, MaJIC has done research and development, conducted failure analysis, materials testing, quality inspection and training with industry across Northern Ontario and with companies like Makami Engineering Group in Sudbury and Wabi Iron and Steel Corp. in New Liskeard.

Technology is ever evolving which means opportunities will only multiply in the years to come. While maintaining a philosophy aimed to help industry succeed, MaJIC intends to reach out to companies across Canada and the globe.

Flexible working hours/ health benefits

Standard work hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. but MaJIC offers its employees flexible working hours, recognizing family and other personal commitments in their lives.

"We have a flexible schedule, because we make up for the time later," said office manager Jennifer Polson. "So if an employee has to leave early to pick up their child, that's OK with us."

MaJIC also offers employees full health benefits.

Community involvement

MaJIC encourages its employees to give back to the community by offering company time and equipment for volunteer projects.

"MaJIC will sometimes donate time or equipment for projects, and employees are often allowed to use equipment outside of business hours for community projects," said Polson.

Training, certification, college and university courses

MaJIC provides funding for employees to further their education and training whether

it be certification or post-secondary courses. "We always try to budget for professional development," said Polson. "Encouraging staff to build their expertise and qualifications benefits not only the employees themselves but MaJIC too. Part of our mandate is to educate industry, so we need to be ahead of the game."

Mentorship program

MaJIC senior staff members are encouraged to share their expertise within the organization's mentorship program. Junior employees, co-operative students and interns receive one-on-one mentorship in an open and unintimidating environment. Polson started as a marketing and development intern with MaJIC five years ago.

"I actually had the opportunity to work with two mentors," said Polson.

"Don Dekker, who was the CEO, with 50 years experience, his expertise was with running big projects. He knows the construction and mining industry very well; and the other was Jane Blackwell, who is one of the founders of MaJIC, has over 30 years of experience. With an MBA, her expertise lies with financials and business fundamentals. My job was to help kickstart the company, develop policies and procedures, build a database, set up financials. I was successfully able to set up MaJIC with two great mentors by my side."

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Nordmin

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Physical Workspace

In November 2012, Nordmin purchased and renovated the former Sir John A. MacDonald Public School in Thunder Bay, transforming it into Nordmin's new technical head office. The new building has offered much needed space for expansion. Employees are accommodated with private offices and workstations designed around natural light to illuminate the interior spaces. Each workspace is equipped with an opaque sliding door for privacy and high performance seating designed by Humanscale. As well, eight sound-proof pods provide private spaces for meetings and phone calls. Nordmin is also now in the process of creating a designer studio.

Future planning and family health benefits

Employees at Nordmin also credit the company's success to the robust employee benefit package and RRSP program. The RRSP program was tailored specifically in partnership with TD Group, offering every employee a TD Waterhouse Account usually reserved for those of high net worth.

Nordmin offers an additional health spending account, a stipend for an athletic membership, considerable vacation time (agreed upon hire) and continuing education rewards and wage reviews.

"A friend once told me 'I work first to better myself, secondly to educate myself and thirdly for money,'" Dougherty said. "It is important that people are able to gain satisfaction, and they succeed with well-paid positions that also allow them to maintain their lifestyles at home." "You can't put a price tag on a valuable employee... you must ensure people have the right tools to do their jobs happily, with satisfaction." 🌱

www.nordmin.com

Denison

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Financial benefits and compensation

Denison offers an extensive benefits and compensation package to staff employees which covers health and dental, life insurance, registered employee/employer savings plan and stock options and performance bonuses. Denison offers hourly employees a retirement savings arrangement and health and dental coverage through a Health Spending Account after working a minimum of 240 hours. Vacation time is calculated at two weeks for the first three years, three weeks from three to 10 years service, four weeks for 10 to 15 years service and five weeks for 15 or more years service.

Employee engagement

Denison hosts a Christmas party as well as family events throughout the year to keep a strong personal connection growing amongst employees. Employee birthday cards are given to all employees on their birthdays.

"Employees are highly skilled and the staff are willing to put in the extra hours," Ludgate said. "If it weren't for the dedication and hard work of our employees we would not have had the success we have earned." 🌱

denisonenvironmental.com

Blue Heron

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"For the Calgary office, I wanted to grow the business in the oil sands area, so this employee is growing the business there," said Byron-Fortin.

Employees in Ottawa provide technical support, so they are able to telecommute.

At the end of September, Blue Heron opened an office in Thunder Bay. That employee is working out of her home. The goal is to provide initial support for the Timmins office and then to expand the business in that part of the North.

RRSP contributions

Blue Heron employees can invest in RRSPs, through the company's matching program.

Investments are managed through payroll deduction and employees can seek out one-on-one financial advice through banking institutions and investment advisors, all on company time 🌱

www.blueheronenv.com

J. L. Richards

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Employee engagement

JLR recognizes long-serving employees with a ceremony and award, which begins at 20 years of service. Each year, the company gives out between 15 to 25 of these awards. Many employees in Northern Ontario have received 20, 25 and 30-year awards due to the company's strong retention rate. JLR encourages team building by hosting two corporate-wide social events — the JLR Spring Prom and an annual golf tournament. The prom invites employees and spouses/guests to Ottawa for a formal dinner and dance. JLR pays for all employees costs, including hotel and travel allowance. At this event, JLR presents 20 year and up plaques to long service employees. Regional offices and Ottawa departments have their own individual Christmas parties. In the summer, each office has their own barbecues and potlucks. 🌱

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MaJIC

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Environment of respect

Hard work doesn't go unrecognized at MaJIC. While tokens of appreciation are always appreciated, MaJIC has also offered its employees the priceless gift of paid time off.

MaJIC also organizes extra curricular activities to give employees the chance to socialize outside work hours.

"I think being a small organization, it's important to get to know everyone on a somewhat personal level," said Polson. "Because employees are exceptionally busy during work hours, this gives us a chance to re-

group, find out what everyone's been up to, and not talk about work. We also have dinners to make new employees feel welcomed or to say goodbye to those who are off to new opportunities."

Staff maintain the organization's same philosophy to help industry but also to help fellow co-workers.

"Since we are a small organization, we're all close-knit," said Polson. "We all care about what other employees are going through so we help each other out." 🌱

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