

Focus on its people makes Groupe SCI a leader

Small firm, big ideas: Business solutions consulting company Groupe SCI attracts industry-leading clients. Its secret? Attract and hire only the best of the best.

For a small business, Groupe SCI — a business consulting firm — certainly packs a punch far above its weight class.

The Montreal-based provider of business-to-business services for the pharmaceutical, professional services and consumer goods industries has garnered many accolades since founder Georges Haddad started the firm in 1998.

But it's not just awards that have proven Groupe SCI can compete with the big players in providing customer relationship management (CRM) and enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions.

It's Groupe SCI's client list, a who's who of heavyweights in their respective industries, including pharmaceutical giant Merck Frosst.

With fewer than 40 employees, Haddad says the secret to SCI's success is simple: It's the staff.

"Our employees are really our ambassadors to our clients," says Haddad, whose entrepreneurial background in IT and commerce helped entrench a workplace esprit de corps that promotes innovation and a can-do attitude.

"Our objective is to empower them to make the best decisions as if it's their own 'business within the business.'"

Of course, it's one thing to talk the talk in the business world. But Groupe SCI walks the walk as an employer of choice in its respective field of work.

Besides offering wages that are above



Groupe SCI staff members enjoyed an afternoon of Iron Chef cooking lessons recently, a fun reward for a job well done.

the industry average, performance bonuses, benefits and pension plans, it also engenders a family-like work environment where employees can bring their children — and even their pets — to work.

It's a recipe that has helped SCI attract top talent from competitors 100 times its size.

"We care about our employees, and we don't treat them as a number," Haddad says.

Reine Abi Rached, Groupe SCI's human resources manager, says the firm's emphasis on hiring top-notch staff gives it a competitive edge over larger firms with deeper

pockets. Even when not actively filling positions, the firm is constantly cultivating relationships with talent.

"We are always building what's called a virtual bench," she says, "because we don't want to miss the opportunity to hire the best talent we can find."

The interview process may be rigorous, but it's for good reason, Haddad says.

"We really look at it as avoiding the cost of a mis-hire, as opposed to just hiring."

Still, finding top talent is a never-ending challenge, and as a result, Groupe SCI

Le Groupe SCI Inc.

- **YEARS IN BUSINESS:** 12
- **NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:** 34
- **HEAD OFFICE:** 3773 Côte-Vertu, Suite 100, Saint-Laurent, Québec H4R 2M3
- **POSITIONS EMPLOYED**
Administrative, sale and presales staff; developers, analysts.
- **WAGE RANGE:** Dependent on the position and qualifications.
- **HIRING INCENTIVES:** Referral bonus for employees.
- **APPLICATION PROCESS:** Visit www.groupesci.com for current career opportunities.

emphasizes a balance of work and home-life for its employees, from flexible work hours to telecommuting.

Of course, Haddad says it doesn't hurt that SCI is just a fun place to work. In fact, ensuring employees love their jobs is practically company policy.

As part of an innovative quarterly incentive program, the entire staff spent an afternoon recently taking Iron Chef cooking lessons — a reward for a job well done.

For Haddad, meeting the high expectations of current — and future — employees just makes good business sense. After all, workplace expectations are a two-way street.

"We're looking for people with an entrepreneurial spirit who won't rest on their laurels," he says. "They want to raise the bar on every project we take on."



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