



CÉGEP DE SAINT-HYACINTHE

**For a successful partnership between the Chamber of Commerce and
a college-level educational institution as part of a project linked to
Essential Skills development in the retail sector**

The masculine is used in this document solely for purposes of brevity and designates women and men equally.

CONDITIONS FOR AN EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP

For a successful partnership, the benefits must be tangible for each partner. These benefits often may be clear but not always easily quantifiable, especially in economic terms. Confidence, credibility, transparency and equality between partners are essential conditions for an authentic partnership. In addition, for an effective and solid partnership, the partners must share the same goal and maintain a common vision of the preferred methods for achieving that goal.

OBJECTIVE

The Chamber of Commerce and the College must share the same objective, supporting the retail sector by developing a structural training project designed to upgrade workers' Essential Skills. Here are the key execution stages for a successful project.

1. Form a committee

The Chamber of Commerce and the College work together to identify and approach people likely to contribute ideas and energy as a member of the committee. For example, the committee may be formed of people from the following backgrounds:

- Business development organization;
- Shopping centre;
- Business development corporation;
- Emploi-Québec business services (or others, based on the province).

2. Conduct a needs analysis

To accurately identify workers' training needs, it is important to conduct a needs analysis after which a training program can be drawn up that is adapted to the needs of merchants and their staff.

Focus groups and questionnaires have been developed, distributed and compiled to clearly determine the needs of merchants and small service companies. This approach provides them with service delivery tailored to their image.

3. Develop an idea

Following dialogue and consultation work (including needs analysis) in the retail sector, the committee will agree on implementation of a training program. As in the case of our project, you should name your program so it will be recognized and add to the program's stability.

For our region, “Retail Motivation” was a brand that subsequently developed into a project and a series of activities linked to the program. This initiative is designed to encourage development of Essential Skills in staff, to optimize service quality and store performance, as well as make this a preferred area for buyers of goods and services. In addition to training workshops, the project will entail various promotional activities.

To carry out this initiative effectively, the Chamber of Commerce and the College have defined their respective roles to ensure synergy. The Chamber of Commerce handles project promotion among its members while the College delivers the training. Both share the work involving execution of promotional products (brochures, invitation, etc.).

4. Start the project

Here are the various start-up stages:

- a) Create a work team;
- b) Draw up an action plan (including a timeline);
- c) Draw up a promotional plan.

a) Create the work team

The team consists of staff members working for one of the two partners:

- Project management -> Chamber of Commerce
- Project coordination -> College
- Project manager -> Chamber of Commerce
- Training adviser -> College
- Editorial and communications -> College

b) Draw up an action plan (including a funding plan)

The work of drawing up an action plan consists of identifying the activities to be conducted to attain the common goal of supporting the retail sector. Here are a few examples:

- Introduce a market prospecting mechanism with stores to encourage them to participate in the various training and project activities;
- Identify training needs; once training has been confirmed, an hourly schedule is drawn up and distributed;
- Organize luncheons with guest speakers on themes related to HR development;
- Organize a Retail Motivation day (see details of this activity in the appendix);
- Organize a Retail Tribute contest and gala evening (see details of this activity in the appendix);
- Project management: costs and benefits.

c) Drawing up a promotional plan

Where appropriate, an activity can be supported by a promotional product. Here are a few examples:

- Press releases > announce the forthcoming project;
- Brochure > publicize the training workshops;
- Invitation card > Retail Tribute gala evening;
- Kit that includes a button with the slogan “Here you are well served,” a flyer and an advertising sign to be posted near store entrances > Retail Motivation Day;
- Advertising in regional business newsletters > announce project benefits, names of winners, etc.

5. Assessing the project’s benefits

Quantitative results can be obtained for project benefits without resorting to exhaustive methods. Here are a few examples of assessment methods:

- Training enrolment numbers;
- Information request numbers (tallied by the secretariat);
- Participation rate in the Retail Tribute gala evening;
- Participation rate in the Retail Motivation Day;
- Compliance with the action plan (were all planned activities carried out?).

APPENDIX

Retail Motivation Day

The theme of this day is “**Here you are well served**” and provides an original way to enhance the retail sector and give merchants an opportunity to raise their profile. This day is designed to highlight the target community as a preferred shopping destination. Each store can participate by organizing a special activity for its customers (e.g.: sampling a product).

Retail Tribute contest and gala

This activity provides a unique opportunity to socialize with merchants from all around the city. In addition to awards for stores that have achieved outstanding performance over the year, the activity also pays tribute to employees who have stood out and to people who have devoted themselves completely to the retail business.

Eligibility conditions – Employee component

Three categories

Retail Tribute Downtown

Retail Tribute Les Galeries (shopping centre)

Retail Tribute Surrounding Area

Three finalists per category will be selected (9 nominees). Of these, one employee in each category will have the chance to become the Grand Prize Winner.

Assessment criteria

Assessment is based on the welcome provided by the employee, waiting time and contact time, the attention paid to the customer’s needs, service, product knowledge, sales techniques, time and priority management, closing the sale, and expressions of gratitude.

The Jury

Winners will be selected by a jury that studies submissions. One visit to each finalist will be made by a mystery shopper and the results will be used by the jury to name the three Grand Prize Winners.

Awards presentation

The three Grand Prize Winners will receive the Retail Tribute Employees trophy, a gift certificate with a value of \$500, a certificate of honour and a laminated photograph of the event. The six other finalists will each receive a gift certificate worth \$100 and a certificate of honour.

Eligibility conditions

- 1- Nominees must work full time (20 hours or more a week) in a store. They must not be a majority shareholder or the owner's spouse, or the majority shareholder in the business.
- 2- Only one nomination may be submitted per store and that nominee must be chosen by a consensus (or majority) of the other employees.
- 3- Nominees must fill out the Employee entry form and the assessment table for their sector (restaurant, service outlet, retail store) as well as the section for all nominees.
- 4- The owner or manager of the store must sign the entry form to certify that the person is employed by this business and that he has reviewed the employee's assessment table.
- 5- Nominees must submit a recent photograph of themselves.

Eligibility conditions – Store component

Assessment criteria and awards

Assessment is based on the store window, store sign and signage, exterior cleanliness, interior layout, merchandising, stands of complementary or differentiating products, price displays, atmosphere, lighting, music, scent, cleanliness, innovation and general appearance.

Jury's Choice Award

The Grand Prize Winner selected by the jury will receive the **Retail Tribute Stores** trophy and a **certificate of recognition**, as well as 10 hours of **coaching** in the area of his choice, worth **\$1,250**, compliments of the Synor business consulting centre at CÉGEP de Saint-Hyacinthe.

People's Choice Award

A jury of five residents of the region will choose the winner. To become a member of the public jury, participants must fill out an entry form published in *Le Courrier* and available at the Marché-Centre and in Les Galeries. They must submit their entry form at the Marché-Centre or Les Galeries (across from Jean-Coutu). They may also enter by Internet on the Chamber's site at www.chambrecommerce.ca. The draw will be held on 26 March 2010. Selected jury members will receive a gift certificate worth \$100 and an invitation to the Retail Tribute gala at the Saint-Hyacinthe golf club on 29 April 2010. The winner of the People's Choice Award will receive the People's Choice trophy and a certificate of recognition.

Builder's Award

A gift will be presented to a person who has been a key figure in the history of retail trade in Saint-Hyacinthe.

Competence Award

A \$300 prize is presented to the store that provided the most training.

The jury

The jury consists of design and architecture professionals, store management teachers, and independent retail specialists. This informed jury will review the five nominated finalists from all categories combined and announce a grand prize winner.

Eligibility conditions

- 1- Fill out the Stores entry form.
- 2- Submit an exterior and interior photograph of the store.
- 3- Any developments must have been completed by 1 March 2010, with or without the assistance of qualified professionals in interior design and/or commercial architecture.
- 4- Submit before and after photographs of store facilities (if renovated).
- 5- Nominees must fill out the assessment table attached to the mailing.