



**For Immediate Release  
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### **Ziptrek Ecotours Wins Employees First Award 2012**

**VANCOUVER, BC** – go2 is pleased to announce that Ziptrek Ecotours is this year's recipient of the Employees First Award. The award was presented at the BC Tourism & Hospitality Awards Dinner as part of the Host Conference 2012.

Sponsored by go2 since its original inception in 2004, the [Employees First Award](#) recognizes BC tourism industry employers that demonstrate exceptional standards of excellence in human resources and people management.

Located in the Resort Municipality of Whistler, Ziptrek Ecotours employs 150 staff in the peak summer season. They have just celebrated their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in business this summer.

"At Ziptrek Ecotours, we are in the business of creating authentic customer experiences and our core operating model is built around connecting with our guests," says Liza Walli, Director, Human Resources of Ziptrek Ecotours. "Our employees are the guest experience 'difference makers' so retention and the ongoing engagement of top talent are critical to the success of our business."

Ziptrek is committed to establishing a strong corporate culture among team members, from front-line to management. Here are a few examples:

- New hires gain immediate access to employee intranet to find information such as policies & procedures, employee handbook, training documents, forms, events calendar and live forums to chat with other employees. Small orientation groups are formed to ensure individual questions and concerns of each new employee are addressed.
- Partnership with a local ski resort allows winter seasonal employees to transfer to Ziptrek in the summer with very little adjustments required.
- Salaried employees receive an annual budget to support their professional development; frontline employees can participate in a mentorship program and be coached by senior staff.
- An innovative system enables employees to receive up-to-the-minute tour statuses via intranet or text messages and they have the flexibility to arrange shift changes online with their peers.

- A 360 review process gives management team an opportunity to receive feedback from their peers, reports and managers.
- Numerous staff recognition initiatives include a monthly award for front-line staff that is peer-nominated and management-selected; celebrations for length of service of staff; Employee & Leader of the Year awards; Employee of the Week recognition during the peak season; and an annual birthday party to celebrate each year of Ziptrek's success.
- An employee assistance fund is available to support staff in times of need, from counseling to emergency grocery shop or prescription coverage. Ziptrek has also donated more than \$15,000 over the last three years to Whistler Community Services, a local non-for-profit that have provided additional support for staff.

As a result, Ziptrek was able to maintain a peak season turnover rate of less than 10%. According to its 2012 Employee Engagement Survey, 93% of employees said they are proud to tell people they work for Ziptrek Ecotours and would recommend the company to others as an employer.

"Through our support for the Employees First Award, we want to promote that the successful recruitment and retention of employees ultimately drives tourism businesses' bottom line," says Arlene Keis, CEO of go2. "Ziptrek's engaged and motivated workforce has led to the delivery of exceptional guest experience – we congratulate them on their success."

#### **About go2**

go2 is BC's tourism and hospitality human resource association responsible for coordinating the BC Tourism Labour Market Strategy, a key component of the industry's growth strategy. Tourism is one of the largest resource industries in BC comprising 18,000 mostly small to medium-sized businesses which directly employ close to 128,000 British Columbians. For more information, visit [www.go2hr.ca](http://www.go2hr.ca).

#### **About Ziptrek Ecotours**

Ziptrek Ecotours is a world leader in the design, development and operation of zipline-based eco-adventures. Named as one of Lonely Planet's Top 10 Canadian Adventures, Ziptrek offers an entertaining combination of education and adventure. For more information, visit [www.ziptrek.com](http://www.ziptrek.com).

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