

For Immediate Release
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GROUSE MOUNTAIN RESORT WINS 2009 'EMPLOYEES FIRST' AWARD

VANCOUVER – Grouse Mountain Resorts Ltd. located in North Vancouver is this year's recipient of the 'Employees First' award presented by go2 - the BC tourism industry's human resources association.

The 'Employees First' Award is presented each year to a BC tourism employer to recognize exceptional standards of excellence in human resources and people management. The award was presented last night at the tenth annual BC Tourism Awards gala, held in Vancouver as part of the provincial tourism industry conference.

"Communication with our employees is key to developing their career goals, and enhancing their general well-being and remuneration," says Charmaine Carswell, Director, Human Resources at Grouse Mountain. "Our 'Peak Performers' brand handbook initiative has also helped us better define our brand with job seekers, and our annual employee survey results have demonstrated consistent improvement in meeting and addressing the needs of our staff. We are honoured to be recognized by go2 and Tourism British Columbia with this prestigious award, and will continue to pursue the best standards in human resources and people management for the betterment of our employees."

Grouse Mountain Resorts Ltd. is an owner-operated, private family-run business that employs close to 800 people and is the largest employer of youth on the North Shore.

Creating many channels for employee communication and a healthy, safe work environment has been paramount to Grouse's success and ability to continuously improve their business. Here are a few examples of their initiatives:

- Grouse's HR department worked with their marketing team to create a new Employee Brand Handbook called "Peak Performers". It is given to all new employees and serves as a guide and reminder of their vision and values. Designed in a fun, pictorial style, it reflects the diversity of their employee base. Phrases from this book are used as tag lines for job ads that are tailored to reach specific target groups.
- In addition to an annual Employee Satisfaction Survey, staff input is solicited on a regular basis. Company department champions relay input from workers directly to the executive team, who in turn assess and implement new ideas and review ongoing projects each quarter.
- An employee intranet called 'MyGrouse' keeps staff informed of new initiatives and serves as a central forum for staff engagement and corporate culture development.
- Improvements were made in both salary and non-salary compensation that includes an RSP program and an extensive incentive program involving team outings, gift certificates and store discounts.
- Grouse received the annual award for *Best Training/Orientation Programs for Young and New Workers* from the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering. All new employees attend a one day orientation program that includes training in customer service, health and safety, WHMIS, bear awareness, and 'MyGrouse' employee intranet.
- Grouse introduced a company-wide smoking cessation initiative with a goal to be smoke free by World No Tobacco day May 31, 2009. As a result of this, fifteen employees have quit to date and they recently received a Recognition Award from the CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society and the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport.

“Effective communication in today’s economy is imperative to maintain an engaged and productive workforce and Grouse is doing an excellent job in this area,” said Arlene Keis, CEO go2. “The most important thing employers can do is regularly communicate with their employees and have channels for employees to provide input as well which is particularly important in times like this.”

All nominees for the ‘Employees First’ Award had to submit an information package that demonstrated how their company has implemented effective HR/people management practices within their organization. Additionally, nominees had to show how these HR practices have positively impacted employee development, loyalty, morale, and their organization’s bottom line. For selection, a panel designated by Tourism British Columbia judged the nominees against the criteria.

About go2

Established by the BC tourism industry in April 2003, go2 is the resource for people in tourism. go2’s mission is to assist the tourism industry as they address challenges in attracting employees and retaining its workforce in order to support industry growth. For more information on go2, visit www.go2hr.ca.

About Grouse Mountain Resort

From sophisticated entertainment to unspoiled nature, Grouse Mountain is the preeminent all-in-one, four season destination with something for everyone. The wilderness paradise is located 15-minutes from downtown Vancouver, and the famous Grouse Mountain Skyride (North America’s largest aerial tram system) takes visitors on a one-mile aerial journey to the Alpine Station, 3,700 feet above sea level. Breathtaking panoramic views of the city, sea and surrounding mountains unfold, culminating with a summit altitude of 4,100 feet. Grouse Mountain was named by a visiting hiking party in 1894, after they encountered a blue grouse bird on the alpine slopes. Today, Grouse Mountain enjoys the status of Vancouver’s most visited attraction receiving over one million visitors each year.

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