

# NORTH AMERICA

In North America, the quality of our employees is the key to differentiating ourselves from the competition.

Our North American operations have central human resources departments which provide direction on policy and operations. Communication with employees is delivered both centrally and at local level through dedicated publications. We also cascade messages to local management for use in local publications and events.

In all our operations everything we do is graded on the performance of our drivers. Consequently we invest heavily in driver recruitment and training. Our standards are frequently more stringent than is required by the State or local Government. Driver training includes pre-trip inspections, defensive driving and behind the wheel safety techniques. Within Durham School Services we only hire one in five driver applicants.

At Stock our recruitment process consists of a three stage interview covering the culture of the organisation, the individual's skills and ability as well as an interview by that individual's peer group. Through this rigorous technique we have developed a profile of natural skills that we require for specific roles, including drivers. This process also gives the individual the opportunity to evaluate his/her suitability for the specific role in question. On joining, new recruits follow a 12-week orientation programme which introduces them to the organisation and prepares them for their role.

Within student transportation all drivers are part-time, which reflects the seasonal nature of the work. We aim to retain as many as possible from school year to school year and provide competitive wage packages and access to benefits such as health insurance for those who wish to return.

## EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

At both Stock and Durham, annual surveys monitor employee satisfaction and specifically our progress against established employee relations plans. These surveys cover both full-time and part-time employees and results are fed back to employees through focus groups. During 2005 ATC will undertake similar employee research.

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

All full-time employees undertake regular coaching which culminates in a personal development programme.

Driver training is regularly updated with first aid and defensive driving programmes. In addition, drivers are regularly accompanied by trainers who provide feedback on their driving ability and interaction with customers.

Stock has an excellent reputation for the quality of its operation. It has maintained this quality and its industry leadership role by focusing on training programmes which are available for both customers and employees, including:

- The Journey Begins – a school bus safety education programme for first time travellers and their parents
- The Journey continues – on-going safety training for elementary age students
- Child check – a special driver assist programme to help ensure the safety and security of children
- The key to managing student behaviour – special training to assist drivers in developing a safe, secure and positive environment on the bus
- Ambassador programme – Stock drivers and employees work closely with district and school employees and parents to promote school bus safety and high standards of service
- Mentor programme – experienced drivers help new drivers to further develop their driving, route and student management skills
- Extra Mile club – encourages and recognises drivers and monitors their efforts and commitment
- Busworks – advanced training to provide drivers with a better understanding of the vehicle
- Deliver the Journey – driver screening and the monitoring of hiring, training and retention processes to help maintain service levels above customer expectations
- Performance measure – an internal audit including the review of the services to promote continuous improvement.

Durham and ATC have their own training 'universities' which deliver employee training. The ATC University provides management training and has established a fast-track course for employees who could take up managerial positions.

## SUCCESSION PLANNING

Our North American operations are currently developing high potential programmes for employees.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY

We aim to mirror the diversity of the communities that we serve. We support equal opportunities across our business and, despite monitoring of diversity being restricted in Canada, we ensure the employee base fairly reflects the make-up of the location. Within the United States, Federal reporting of diversity is required and annual affirmative action plans are developed to address areas for improvement. During 2004 Durham School Services specifically targeted minority Chambers of Commerce and personnel leaving the military as potential new recruits. During 2005 ATC will be targeting African American young professionals through the established national "In roads" programme.