

Neat Notions



Hayes Forest Services' secret is well kept. From their tidy offices to clean pickup trucks, the company knows that the small things add up to big success – and they have a national award as one of the best-managed companies to prove it.

Donald Hayes perched in style in the company's rotunda. In December 2001, the company was recognized as being among Canada's 50 best managed companies in a national competition sponsored by Anderson, CIBC, the National Post and Queen's University School of Business.

By Bill Tice



Hayes Forest Services is no ordinary logging company – you know as soon as you walk through the front door. The lobby is a warm, inviting rotunda. It features wood accents and a bench made from engineered wood products. A large burl, from a logging block that Hayes was harvesting, has been carved by Huu-ay-aht First Nation

members, and serves as a second seating area. A mural by Victoria illustrator Russ Willms covers most of the rotunda's walls. The outdoor scene was created from his watercolours, which were scanned, enlarged and printed onto a billboard-like medium that was then glued to the wall with only one seam. The original watercolours are on display in the company boardroom.

The building, in Duncan, BC, on



Helicopter logging is a big part of Hayes' operation, keeping the crew's five helicopters going full time. Maintenance has led to another business venture – Helicopter repair services.

Vancouver Island, previously served as the regional office for BC's Ministry of Forests. It's wired for high tech, as is the adjoining 20 000 square ft of industrial space used for the company's helicopter facility and equipment rebuild shop.

The attention to details stands out as you head a little deeper into the 10 000 square ft. office: the work areas are meticulously neat, paperwork is stored in identical binders and displayed on

shelves, name plates are not the standard plastic ones, but etched glass. The site features a gym and the employee lounge has leather couches, a gas fireplace, full kitchen and a fancy espresso machine. The coffee machine "was a payback to the employees for giving up their lunch room for five years when we needed space and outgrew our previous facility," company president Donald Hayes explains.

To some, all of the extra comforts found in the Hayes facility might seem extravagant, especially given today's tough economic times. But Donald Hayes insists that the philosophy of making Hayes an exceptional place to work has reaped huge dividends. "We have built a corporate culture around our people," he explains. "This corporate culture has developed a life of its own and our employees strive to excel and out-



Not your typical contractor's service bay.

***At left:** Hayes runs a world class fly-in helicopter maintenance facility to service its own fleet and to perform outside contract work.*

***Below:** At Hayes work is done right, with the right tools, or not at all.*

perform our competition. A long time ago, we came to believe and understand that if you set standards on things that may seem superficial, people will set high standards for the things that are important. For example, setting a standard that says our pickup trucks will be clean, the office will be organized and tidy and the grass in front of the building will be cut, sets the stage for a higher standard when it comes to more important things. I firmly believe that if we set a high standard for the minor things we can control, then our staff will carry these standards through to the things that are important to our customers."

Hayes says it has been a family goal to create a happy place to work and the best atmosphere they can provide for people.

"Because of the atmosphere we offer, we typically attract people who want to work really hard and be a part of something where they can experience a high sense of camaraderie in their workplace."

One-Stop Shop

The company's success also hinges on their strategy of offering one stop shopping for all forest services, Hayes says.

"Our specialty is that we can provide all of the services that a timberland owner needs to manage, harvest, and market their timber, and this is what makes us unique and a leader in the industry," he says. "As far as we know, there is nowhere else that our customers can go to receive all of the services that we offer under one roof. Typically in this business you will find engineering companies, you will find logging companies, and you will find he-

licopter companies. But we are different in that we do all of this and it is our unique management systems that allow us to be successful in these areas."

The "management systems" Hayes refers to are something that he is particularly proud of. Developed over a number of years, these systems have become the cornerstone of the business. They include integrated management teams, customized computer information systems, and financial management systems that address each of the primary operating functions of the forest industry.

"By utilizing our management systems,

we have taught loggers how to use computers and we have taught accountants how to log," Hayes says. "While other companies are striving to just survive in this economy, we have been growing and honing our management team and management systems."

The Hayes success story has not gone unnoticed. In December 2001, the company was recognized as being among Canada's 50 best managed companies in a national competition sponsored by Anderson, CIBC, the National Post and Queen's University School of Business. Hayes was featured in a Post supplement showcasing the top 50 after a panel of judges made their picks based on companies that have demonstrated success, despite a harsh economy.

"Receiving the award as one of Canada's top 50 managed companies is proof



positive that we have come a long way in this industry,” Hayes says. “If you read the list of the other 49 companies, it is amazing that a logging company would appear on the same page. It is an unbelievable compliment to our staff.”

Good Neighbours

The list of clients that Hayes works with is also a testament to their work. In the coastal BC area where most of their work is centred, the list includes such well-known names as Weyerhaeuser, Canfor, TimberWest, Interfor, Western Forest Products, Dunkley, JS Jones and West Fraser. They also work with a number of First Nations and have a full time First Nations development officer on staff, Earl Smith, a respected First Nations Elder.

“For many years, we have been involved with First Nations in the areas that we have logged and we were probably described as being good neighbours,” Hayes says. “With the evolving role of First Nations in the forest industry, we have set out to be a preferred supplier to First Nations. We now work with many bands as advisers, as business consultants,

and in some cases as joint venture partners. This is the case with the Huu-ay-aht First Nation in Bamfield, BC, where we started out by working with them on logging projects. We have assisted them in negotiating logging contracts and terms, provided analysis work for their treaty negotiations, carried out conventional logging for them, and managed helicopter lifts for some of their stream restoration projects. We have even formed a joint venture with the Huu-ay-aht to further our mutual forestry interests.”

Hayes is also becoming well known for two other services. Crews at Hayes will recondition logging equipment for third party customers, offering everything from complete mechanical overhauls to paint jobs. The helicopter overhaul facility is the latest venture for the company. In addition to maintaining their own fleet of three Sikorsky S61N “Shortsky” and two Bell 206B helicopters, Hayes is now offering overhaul, repair and maintenance services to other Sikorsky and Bell operators. The Transport Canada approved facility has its own helipad for fly-in accessibility and includes

state of the art equipment and a full inventory of parts.

“Aviation is a growing area, and we have created a first-class facility to service both commercial and military helicopters,” Hayes says.

Maintaining helicopters is a long way from where the Hayes brand started out. Donald’s grandfather, Douglas Hayes started Hayes Trucks in the 1920’s and was the inventor of the first rotating logging truck bunk, a design that is still the standard in today’s logging truck business. In the 1950’s, Donald’s parents, Donald and Harriet Hayes, started the business that has become Hayes Forest Services Limited, and in the mid ’80s, the younger Donald started full time in the business. His brothers Harold and Jeffery are also active in the company.

Walking back through the lunchroom and office area following a tour of the helicopter maintenance facility, Hayes chats with employees along the way. The friendly banter shows Hayes has succeeded in creating a dynamic corporate climate. It’s a tidy success story told in the details.

