



CASE STUDY

Building an atmosphere of success for Sovereign Fusion

The manufacturing industry has always faced difficulty in attracting new talent. There's a major shortage of skilled and specialized trade workers throughout all industry subsectors. In fact, it's the top challenge manufacturing companies face. And, even when new talent is hired, new employees tend to lack experience and require further training.

About Sovereign Fusion

Sovereign Fusion Inc. was started by Tom Sovereign in 1990. The company specializes in mobile welding, structural fabrication, and pipe fusion. Thirty employees currently work in the 6000-square-foot fabrication shop in Campbellville, Ontario, which houses 10-tonne overhead cranes and 20 mobile welding trucks for offsite projects. Tom takes pride in the immaculately kept facility, showing customers the company's commitment to standards and safety.

Initial challenges

As with all manufacturing industry subsectors, skilled labour is hard to come by—which makes it difficult to recruit welders. Lori Wilson, BDO HR Services Manager notes, "This is a highly specialized area where you have to operate various types of equipment, like huge cranes, under sometimes harsh conditions. Because it's not very glamorous, we see a high turnover in this area."

Sovereign Fusion was seeing issues, in particular, when it came to expanding their recruiting efforts to other positions in the company—detailers, fusion technologists, and shop supervisors. "We're a small company that's moving and getting bigger. And that comes with its growing pains," says Tom Sovereign, President. "Staff shortages create all kinds of problems, like job-completion setbacks, not meeting deadlines, and turning away jobs due to lack of manpower."

The recruiting process requires time and dedication. As Lori states, "To get ahead of the curb, you need to target people early in their career, inspire what's possible in a new industry, and show them the value of real-life perspectives."

Why BDO?

BDO has provided Sovereign Fusion with accounting services from the start of the business 30 years ago. In 2017, the company's BDO accountant advised on using BDO Human Resources Consulting

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Services for additional recruiting support. It was only fitting to seek consulting from a professional services firm that specializes in small and medium-sized businesses and holds client relationships in such high regard. "Never could we have the level of trust and security as we do with BDO. We're big on staying local, loyal, and building on existing or long-lasting professional relationships," Tom says.

To help find new talent, Sovereign Fusion needed an out-of-the-box approach that did more than just put on a job fair.

Attracting new talent

The open house featured all the equipment running as it would during regular operations, so attendees could see everything in live action. It also showcased one of the brand new welding trucks that were added to the existing fleet. Booths and brochures can only take you so far—seeing everything up close was a more engaging way to show what Sovereign Fusion is.

Prior to the event, we created buildup by blasting promotion on multiple social media channels, on radio ads, and at surrounding schools for skilled trades. Invitees included various suppliers, all those involved with day-to-day operations, as well as neighbouring businesses. Further to getting a focused group of people together to find new hires, the open house was a way to build a sense of community among everyone in the area.

"For us to be successful in this type of scenario, we need to be on the right path as management with the same goals and expectations."

– Tom Sovereign, President



“We’re the ones who create the atmosphere for success. We can’t get the right people here without being the right people first.”

– Tom Sovereign, President



Once the event had passed and potential candidates were identified, BDO provided support in the screening and interviewing process. Our involvement in recruiting led to further guidance on restructuring positions within operations and management, and more inclusive training at all levels and departments, fostering transparency. As Tom states, “It’s not just about training new hires; it’s about constantly training management to stay competitive.”

How did the event do?

This open house had a huge impact; it introduced new methods of recruiting that helped resolve a core business problem for Sovereign Fusion. Further, it sparked the need for us to collaborate in more HR-related business activities—like additional training and organizational support. The standalone event yielded four new hires out of 50 event attendees. “To put that in perspective, past job fairs with an average of 600-800 attendees didn’t guarantee hires at all, or ones that were the right fit,” Lori explains.

Quality trumps quantity when it comes to hiring. Indeed, having the right resources was pivotal to successfully pulling the event off. We had to combine the right timing, strategic planning, and seasonal considerations for both manufacturing industry cycles and peak hiring seasons.

Impact on further HR involvement

“With this experience, one thing we learned was to ask for help,” Tom recalls. “We definitely have the right tools to continue to get better at recruiting. However, we’re always open to new and creative ways to attract potential candidates.”

BDO continued to offer various HR support well after the open house.

Tom continues, “Since BDO has partnered with us to assist with our HR needs, employees have more direction; we’re seeing improved overall organization, and a new company culture has taken shape. We are far from done building this out, but the groundwork is there.”

After seeing the value BDO’s HR support adds, the decision to keep moving forward together was easy.



Looking forward

The resounding success of the open house reminded both Sovereign Fusion employees and event attendees of the passion behind the work the company does. In attracting potential candidates and neighbouring businesses, it was good for morale and for building professional relationships. More than anything, the event reaffirmed our joint efforts in day-to-day HR activities at Sovereign Fusion.

"BDO's help affected future planning immensely," says Tom. "Our core group has been together for a long time. As such, you tend to get complacent. We're a service company, so we're constantly acting like triage, because so many moving parts are changing constantly. It's important to know how to prioritize."

Sovereign Fusion plans to put on an open house for new talent at least one or two times a year to continue the momentum.

BDO HR Services

Seeing the success of this event opened up the potential to use the same strategy for other clients as well.

BDO HR services works with all industries, subsectors, and company sizes. Services encompass full-cycle recruitment, which includes hiring, onboarding, and termination. It also includes return-to-work claims, modified work plans, developing or revising employee handbooks, organizational design, and steering complex



conversations that involve management, employees, and potential candidates. We service clients with or without existing in-house HR departments with advice on top-down HR management to improve operations.

For any inquiries about HR Consulting Services, our team is happy to discuss building, evolving, and managing your human capital.

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