

Fekete Associates Inc.

INDUSTRY CATEGORY

Engineering and Technical Services

PURPOSE

Offers engineering software products, consulting services and training to optimize oil and gas reservoir management and production.

SIZE

150 full-time employees.



This year, the teams were provided only Popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners and rubber bands to build catapults. Last year, for the egg-drop challenge, they got cotton balls, plastic sticks and tape to construct landing pads to cushion the blow of raw eggs dropped 15 feet.

The 160 employees at Fekete Associates who participate in the annual event call it “The Mac-Gyver Challenge,” after the resourceful TV secret agent who manages to get out of tight spots by using everyday items.

“We have a blast doing that,” says Krystina Vidiuk, one of many engineers at the company that offers software products, consulting services and training programs designed to optimize oil and gas reservoir recovery and production.

That’s not all the “Feketies” do for fun. They’ve gone horseback riding and participated in drum circles and archery and built and flown model airplanes together. And, to maximize fun on their own time, weekends start at noon on Friday for all company engineers, geologists, technologists, programmers and support personnel.

There’s also plenty of room for advancement within the company. Just ask Tammie Roy who started at the company 14 years ago as the receptionist, then worked in software development, then became a marketing co-ordinator before becoming the marketing manager. Now she’s the manager of corporate services.

“They said, ‘Let’s sit down and see what you enjoy and want to do.’ And essentially they created this role for me,” says Roy. “It was totally amazing.”

Every year, 12 to 15 employees volunteer for the company program, Paint the Town, during which staff paint the homes of Calgarians who can’t physically or financially do so for themselves. Last year, they spent about seven hours on a Saturday painting an elderly woman’s trailer home and fence.

Roy says she ended up painting next to a co-worker who works in software development — hadn’t known on a more personal level. “It was really great because we got talking to one another and we were joking around a lot,” she says.

After discovering the homeowner — who was deaf and isolated — couldn’t afford to fix her toilet, employees held a jellybean-jar contest to collect money to pay a plumber.

All this fun stuff is indicative of the company’s overall approach: open, approachable and ready for anything. Many employees appreciate that management has an open-door policy. In fact, Vidiuk says she has “silly conversations” with the company’s president.

“Sometimes when I’m dating someone new, I tell him about it and ask his advice,” she says. “He even once told me that if the guy isn’t nice to me, just let him know and he’d kick his butt.”

— C.H. ➤

KEY EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Active social club; Friday afternoons off; employees encouraged to climb the corporate ladder; open-door management policy; paid training and education.

WHY IT’S THE BEST PLACE TO WORK

The company fosters a team atmosphere in all endeavours.