

BEST PLACES TO WORK

SEALWELD CORPORATION A FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE



Left to right, **Jesse Feakes, Dave Stefanek, Glenn Macadam, Tiffany Chisholm, Gerry Lewis-Steer, and Juanita Chisholm.**

Number of employees: 20

Key employee benefits: Opportunities for international travel; free lunches and a birthday lunch; an extra paycheque when a child is born into an employee's family; paid educational training.

Why it's a Best Place to Work: A fun family-oriented work environment in a comfortable workplace; numerous opportunities for advancement, training and training.

SMALL FEWER THAN 25 EMPLOYEES

Even though Ernie Coates got his 45-page business passport only two years ago, it's pages are pretty much filled with visas and customs' stamps — a testament to the many countries where he has worked for Sealweld Corp. Coates has crisscrossed the globe fixing and maintaining industrial-sized valves and pipelines owned by Sealweld clients in 68 countries.

"Usually, you hit the ground running," he says of the international emergency calls he responds to when locals fail to solve valve problems. "We're kind of like the Red Adairs [a renowned oilfield firefighter] of the valve business," he proudly says.

What Coates likes best about working abroad is returning to the Calgary office, where he feels grounded. "It's a homey atmosphere," he says, adding, "This is a family-run company where everyone gets along."

Founded in 1969 by William Chisholm, Sealweld has provided a comfortable workplace from its humble beginnings. Today, the company base in the Foothills Industrial Park is run by William's son, Dean, with support from his wife Juanita, the three children they have raised together, and 20 employees.

"I grew up at Sealweld," says Dean, 50, who comes across as a relaxed, caring uncle. He is keen to point out the recent renovations to the company's main building, where, in a cozy kitchen, employees make soup and sandwiches of cold cuts and cheeses provided by Sealweld. And on each worker's birthday, they order in whatever they fancy. "We've had everything from Vietnamese to burgers." The company also provides an additional paycheque when an employee's child is born. "We try to be respectful of people with family commitments," Dean says.

—Wes Lafortune

Calgarians who work for small companies are most satisfied with their workplace.

85% of Calgarians surveyed who work for small companies with fewer than 25 employees indicated that they were completely satisfied with their workplace, compared to 81% at medium-sized companies with 25 to 99 employees, and 76% at large companies with 100 or more employees.

Employees at small Calgary companies have the most faith in their company's corporate reputation.

Of those surveyed, 81% of people who work at small companies rated their company's corporate reputation as excellent, compared to 64% at medium-sized companies and 71% at large companies.

Employee input is most likely sought at small companies.

82% of employees at companies with fewer than 25 employees said their input is actively sought by management, compared to 67% at medium-sized companies and 55% at companies with more than 100 employees. By sector, 84% of employees at non-profits feel their input is actively sought, followed by 71% in the technology sector and 68% in both business and financial, and media and creative.