



Jill Dean, vice president, and
Garry Rentz, president and CEO.

PERSONAL SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Offering adults education training and career counseling necessary to find meaningful employment

BY CHRISTOPHER CUSSAT

AT A GLANCE

LOCATIONS:
EDMONTON,
CALGARY, FORT
SASKATCHEWAN, AB

**CLIENTS ASSISTED IN
PAST TWO YEARS:**
1,100+

**REVENUE INCREASE
IN PAST TWO YEARS:**
25%

**PLACEMENT SUCCESS
RATE SINCE 1988:**
85%+

IN A GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS SPURRED on by bad investments, mismanagement, and corporate greed on an unprecedented level, it is encouraging to see a benevolent company that selflessly cares about society and is giving something back to the world. The only thing that could possibly be better, is to know that such a company like Personal Support & Development Network (PSDN) not only exists, but it continues to grow larger in size, scope, and success, which in turn helps and benefits more and more people in need.

PSDN was founded in 1988 by Garry Rentz and his wife Donna. Garry, president and CEO of PSDN has brought

much social service experience to the company after 24 years of working for the Alberta government. His résumé includes being directly involved with managing provisions for both the economically challenged and child welfare. Rentz also has expertise in the areas of staff training and development, rehabilitation services, effective employment placement for welfare recipients, inter-governmental program delivery, and care facility management. Donna continues to be an integral part of PSDN and Rentz's daughter, Jill Dean, is currently the company's vice president.

The purpose of PSDN is to provide employment placement and career services

to people who have trouble obtaining and/or maintaining employment. Garry explains, "We assist people who have experienced difficulty entering or re-entering the work force." For the past 21 years, this private-sector business has been working with the Provincial and Federal governments under bid contracts. In addition, PSDN's smaller, sister company, Careers in Transition, does similar work through the government's Accountability Framework Agreement (AFA).

The nature of PSDN's contracted work depends on the state of the economy and what services are needed to assist clients with the transition from unemployment or underemployment to independence. Rentz notes that the factors creating difficulty are varied and responsive to economic conditions. "When the economy is in growth conditions, we work with persons who have severe barriers to employment caused by a myriad of factors, including criminal records, substance abuse, physical or mental disability, and recent emigration with limited language and transferable skills."

Subsequently, if the economy is in decline or recession, PSDN deals with people who are barred from employment for much less recognizable factors such as incomplete high school certification, short tenure with their last employer, negative workplace attitudes, and weak résumés.

PSDN's career services include an array of offerings that range from disseminating available employment information, supportive employment counselling, résumé production or upgrades, job search training, and career retraining and reorientation.

The company serves two related, but distinct customers: each unemployed person seeking assistance, and the ministry that carries the responsibility of providing support for those who are out of work and unable to meet their survival needs.

Rentz underscores two factors that give PSDN a competitive advantage: "Our experience with the service demands of the clientele and our tenure in the arena." In fact, PSDN has provided services in all phases of the typical economic cycle: decline, recession, growth, and boom. Because the company has "seen

it all," they are experts in appropriately responding to all of the specific consequences and requirements that every conceivable economic situation can create. He adds, "We know from experience how to design and deliver career services that meet the demands at each phase of the economic cycle." PSDN is also unique in the fact that it has serviced people from a diverse selection of needs and backgrounds.

In addition, PSDN provides academic upgrading and skill training to eligible younger adults. Rentz explains, "We launched this venture as a result of our recognition of the role a shallow academic certification plays as an employment barrier. Our program allows eligible persons to achieve high school equivalency diplomas, thereby opening

the door to many secure, larger employers that generally screen out applicants who do not have this credential." These PSDN "graduates" also attain the possibility for entry into a significant number of post-secondary institutions.

Thousands of clients have transitioned to employment through the efforts of PSDN and the resulting benefits for the government and society as a whole have been significant. Rentz's hope for the future is to continue helping as many people as possible. "We are pleased to open the doors to our business each morning and we are fortunate to do work where we make real differences in the lives of our clients. Hardly a month goes by without a really good success story unfolding with us having had a significant role—we are proud of what we do." CEQ

Services and Programs Offered

- GED preparation
- Computer training
- Guided study
- Résumé development
- Job-placement assistance
- Alarm-installer program



**careers
in transition**

Providing career counseling, placement and training services in Alberta since 1988.

Phone: (780) 496-9224

Fax: (780) 496-7679

web: <http://www.citinc.ca/>

560, 10621 100 Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta

T5J 0B3

