

Hitting the heights - EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

THE war against the skills shortage is being won by diversified property group Colliers as they seek to identify, attract and retain the right people.

With an in-house recruitment team known as Colliers Careers, the organisation revitalised its retention initiatives, including the introduction of more flexible working arrangements for work/life balance as well as putting control of career progression in the hands of employees through Colliers University, the company's in-house professional development program, and through introducing personal development planning. The company won four awards at the 2008 REIA National Awards for Excellence, including Commercial Agency of the Year.

Based in Adelaide, Roger Klem, National Agency Director Healthcare and Retirement Living, manages the sale of retirement villages, nursing homes and private medical and care-based facilities.

“A big part of working here is that you develop relationships with people,” according to Mr Klem. “There's a high level of camaraderie, people tend to stay around for a long time.”

Mr Klem will celebrate 20 years with the company next November and credits the farsightedness of his employer to his length of service.

“The company has given me succession plans, so instead of bolting after five years when I had itchy feet, the company had the capacity to create me an opportunity in commercial leasing and I spent 10 years in investment sales,” he says.

The last three years Mr Klem has spent in his current arena and he reckons that Colliers was able to recognise the value he brought to the table and capitalise on the investment they made in him.

“We tend to know each other and play off each others strengths and this is an important aspect that is something other people who come and join the firm notice,” he says.

“While it's a hard-working culture, there is a significant amount of fun here and culturally it's a very flat little hierarchy. The CEO is sitting in the same open plan space that the person who started last week.”

He also cites individual empowerment and the sharing of information as another bonus.

“There is nothing held back in terms of how the division, company or people are performing-people are given a lot of information to succeed.

“We have no excuses. They give you the best possible tools, whether you are an industrial leasing person, a valuer or in a non-income producing area.”

Mr Klem says that he has made some great mates among his colleagues and even spent time walking the Inca Trail in Peru with them last year.

Based in the Sydney CBD team in the Valuations and Consultancy division, Tanja Simlesa, 25, focuses on retail valuations. She joined Colliers International when she moved to Sydney from Adelaide last year. "My job involves valuing retail properties such as shopping centres," she explains.

After graduating with a bachelor of business in property from the University of South Australia, Ms Simlesa moved to Sydney late 2007 where she spoke with a number of potential employers before deciding on Colliers.

"I did get to see quite a few different people when I made the move to Sydney," she admits. But she says the initial contact was one of the key points in choosing Colliers. "They have a great office set up and the whole five star building appeals to me," she says.

Ms Simlesa says that her first meeting was with the managing director and initially she was very nervous.

"Meeting with management, when I first came in, the feel I got from them was they were really approachable," she recalls. Ms Simlesa also felt that she and the culture were a good fit.

"It seemed very young and dynamic and it appealed to me, I did not get this feeling with any other company, I'll admit and now I have been here a couple of months I know I have made the right choice," she says.

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