

Working in a state-of-the-art facility, Randy Semeniuk knows how to make his job of Equipment Supervisor easier at Lions Gate Trailers Ltd. in Edmonton Alberta.

"First of all you start with a good product and then you surround yourself with a bunch of good people and some terrific customers. It's that easy," he says.

For Randy it is all about keeping the customers happy.

"The most aggravating thing that can happen to a customer is to have a piece of equipment that isn't working," he explains.

"Our philosophy is when it's fixed it should stay fixed. We don't do patch jobs," he adds.

It is that kind of attitude that is typical of the way Randy does his job and it ensures customers keep coming back to Lions Gate Trailers Ltd. for their rental and service needs.

"We have customers who know that when it comes down to getting the job done, we are the first ones in this business that they call. Our trailers are usually the first ones to leave and the last ones to come back. Our trailers are well maintained and we make sure of that," he says.

To know Randy is to know the caliber of people that make Lions Gate Trailers Ltd. what it is today.

THE COMPANY AND ITS PEOPLE

The company has been serving the transportation industry for over 39 years, the last 13 years as a dealer for Great Dane Trailers in British Columbia.

"Our alignment with Great Dane Trailers means we offer a quality product and our commitment to maintaining that product is the reason customers keep coming back," says Randy.

Lions Gate Trailers Ltd. is a Canadian owned Semi Trailer rental, leasing, repair, parts, painting and sales company with locations in British Columbia and Alberta. The company website (www.lgtr.com) says it all: 'Our goal of the company is to supply top customer service, well maintained equipment, quality workmanship, top quality Great Dane equipment - all at competitive prices'.

PROFESSIONALISM COUNTS

Randy knows to do that he needs qualified professionals in his shop.

To do that he knows he needs a quality work environment for those professionals.

"You have to understand these people working here are on the floor for 8 hours and more every day and they probably see each other more here than they see their own wives and kids at home so it has to be an easy going place to work, one where they get the respect they deserve," he explains.

With an 18-bay facility and 24 employees, Randy has his work cut out for him.

"We are not open weekends and we don't do shifts and like I said, everybody here has a family of some sort or another and they want to be with them so you work within those parameters," he explains.

He must be doing something right because many of the employees have been there for a long time.

"You have to keep the technicians you have and you have to try to groom new ones. There is a huge shortage as with all trades, whether it is for a drywaller or heavy duty technician, and you have to be aware of that fact," he adds.

Randy's team includes a very knowledgeable shop foreman Shawn Rushton and quality mechanics, three of whom are heavy duty diesel technicians and a number of whom are trailer mechanics.

"We realize the value of training and have quite a few apprentices. We have apprenticeships for heavy duty technicians and journeyman trailer mechanics," he says.

"The technicians here look after the full wheel deal, everything from your light bulb on the front to repairs in the event of a rollover. We have qualified welders and rebuilders who can service everything from a single axle converter to a 40 wheel combination," he adds.

ABOUT RANDY

Randy knows full well the value of training. A number of the apprentices at his shop have come through the North Alberta Institute of Technology program.

When he began his own career he apprenticed as a heavy duty technician with Alberta Transportation where he remained for close to five years the last 2 of which were on a mobile service truck.

"I had a territory to service and did whatever it took to get the guys home," he says.

He took a job with John Deere working on agricultural equipment and it was work he enjoyed but after about three years the poor economic situation for farmers started to kick in and so he had to look for work elsewhere.

It was then, back in 1988 that he got a job as trailer mechanic with Lions Gate Trailers Ltd. in what was then a three-bay shop and he has been there ever since.

Having worked his way up to his current position he knows what his employees face day in and day out and he stays connected by remaining very hands-on.

"I do have a great group of people working here but sometimes when we get really busy I will get right into it myself," he says.

BUSINESS IS BRISK

The booming economy that is happening right now in Alberta, due mainly to the rising price of oil, means more business for Lions Gate Trailers Ltd.

"Our work is primarily on equipment to do with the oil industry. I would say it is 45 - 55% of our business these days now that the tar sands have opened. You can't walk around this area without stumbling into money," he says.

"Like I said we have 18 bays and of those, two are for washing, one is for tire repairs, one for parts and equipment, and the other 14 are working bays. We are busy every day," he adds.

Lions Gate Trailers Ltd. has three locations, the one where Randy works in Edmonton, the head office in Coquitlam, British Columbia and their newest location in Calgary.

"We can rent to anybody for just the afternoon or to a customer that may want to keep the trailer for 5 or better years on a long term contract. We deal with everybody in the trucking industry," says Randy.

The success of Lions Gate Trailers Ltd. is due to a number of factors including the competent sales staff, the research and development that has gone into the business and knowing what trailer works best for what application.

"Some days it seems there is no keeping up to business here we are so busy but we manage it. In Edmonton we have a very large rental fleet to look after as well as customers own trailer units," says Randy.

"At this time of year we are pretty close to the end of the ice road season (end of March) and there are a lot of people running up north to Yellowknife and they use our vehicles to do that job so they have to be in top condition. We have over 200 trailers up there and we know that time is money for these customers so we have to make sure they are well maintained and won't break down," he adds.

And that is what Randy's job is all about.

"My biggest objective at the end of the day is to make sure everybody working here can get home and make sure our equipment is in top notch condition and ready for the next day," he says.

ALBERTA FLEET MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Randy belongs to the Alberta Fleet Maintenance Supervisor's Association (AFMSA). In fact he is a past president.

"I did my tour for the term of one year and was on the executive for about four years," he says humbly.

He is a big advocate of the Association and says, "You meet a lot of good people there and make some great contacts through networking. Joining the Association is a great idea."

His involvement meant he organized one of the conferences. They are held every second year.

"I helped out one year. We had a trade show and speakers and so on. It went over quite well I think. That was in the spring of 2004," he says.

That year he won the Alberta Fleet Manager of the Year Award.

"It is based on how the industry views your performance and your involvement in the Association etc. A group of people in the industry select the winner," he says, not used to all this fanfare.

Randy is a firm believer in "passing it forward" and so he will often offers encouragement to others in the industry.

"I tell people to go to school and get their education in the field. I encourage the young guys to do this," he says.

Lions Gate Trailers Ltd. is of the same mindset and is in the process of putting together a mentoring program for the shop environment.

"I believe that good things happen to the people that want to work. We are right in the midst of a booming economical cycle and we don't want to fritter that away. A mentoring program is just what we need," he says.

"I am very fortunate. I got this opportunity many years ago to work here and well, I just never let go. I am surrounded by great people and that is what makes coming to work here something I look forward to every day," he concludes.