

## Rodan Energy wants to spark employee ideas

When Nishant Gehani joined Rodan Energy as a Power Systems Specialist in 2010, the job description included the standard “additional duties as required.” But he soon discovered that this clause means something quite different at this innovative and fast-growing mid-sized company than at many larger companies.

“Not to blame big business, but roles become more defined as corporations mature and many of their procedures become standardized,” says Gehani, an engineer who had previously worked for two large, long-established organizations. “At Rodan, the ‘other duties as required’ are the largest part of my job.

“Ultimately, it’s about giving the employee the flexibility to define the scope and the nature of their job,” he says. “Here I am encouraged to develop innovative solutions by combining customer needs, company capabilities and my personal ideas.”

“We empower our staff to take ownership of their career and take the initiative in serving their clients.”

— Paul Grod,  
President and CEO

The seeds for Rodan Energy were sewn in the early 2000s when Ontario was in the process of breaking up and selling off parts of its publicly owned electricity utility. At the time, Paul Grod, now Rodan’s President and CEO, was a lawyer with one of Canada’s largest law firms. Working on the deregulation of Ontario Hydro, he realized that opening up the province’s electricity market to competition could produce some exciting opportunities.

He had sought out a small metering services company in Belleville, Ont., and together with business partner and Rodan CFO Borys Chartchenko, bought it and set up headquarters in Mississauga, Ont. In the 13 years since, Rodan Energy has grown from a six-person operation with one basic service to 70 employees offering state-of-the-art energy analytics and management. These provide power producers, distributors and large electricity consumers with the means to better control their total energy footprint.

While some of Rodan Energy’s growth has come through acquisitions, being innovative has allowed the company to grow organically, evolving and moving into new markets. Rodan Energy, for instance, was the first company in Ontario to enable commercial, industrial and institutional energy consumers to participate in demand response programs. These programs help keep the energy grid in balance by paying large power consumers to reduce their usage during peak demand periods like hot summer days.

A key Rodan Energy strategy is to hire talented people and provide them with the framework where they feel free to do their best work and reach their full potential, says Grod. “Creating a culture of innovation takes a number of steps,” he adds. “We hold weekly meetings where we encourage everyone to be up to speed on developments in their sector and come to the table offering suggestions. We also empower our staff to take ownership of their career and take the initiative in serving their clients.”

In addition to a dynamic can-do culture, Rodan Energy offers competitive salaries and benefits, including a matching RRSP pension plan and financial support for ongoing employee training and development. It helps employees balance their work and personal lives with shortened and compressed work weeks, flexible hours and telecommuting work options.



EMPLOYEES TAKING PART IN ONE OF MANY RODAN ENERGY FUNDRAISERS TO ASSIST LOCAL CHARITIES



First, however, they have to get through the hiring process, which Grod himself acknowledges is not easy. Job candidates may be asked to role play, make PowerPoint presentations or draw up a business development plan.

“We spend a lot of time before we hire someone, which can turn off some candidates who say ‘it’s too much work,’” says Grod. “We want to see how they function and make sure they’re a good fit so that six months later neither side feels it made a mistake.”

Gehani, who was recently promoted to Manager of Engineering, views the time and effort he spent preparing for three rounds of job interviews as an investment in his future. The payoff is friendly, collaborative fellow employees and a productive career.

“I was looking for a job where the focus is on finding really creative, innovative solutions to customers’ problems,” he says. “It’s worked out even better than I’d anticipated.”



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