



Looking to tomorrow at TVO

We will soon begin bargaining to renew our collective agreement at TVO/TFO. The challenges faced by members of the Canadian Media Guild and the public broadcaster are many. We need to think about what management's strategic review, and the new initiatives that arise from it, should mean to TVO/TFO employees.

Our business is changing in many ways...in terms of technology, audience expectations and market diversity. However, one thing has not changed; it is still a people business. The success of TVO and TFO is almost entirely dependent upon the talents, energies and imagination of employees. In a world where content is king, creating a collective agreement that is reflective of the importance of employees will be the major goal of this round of talks.

In the coming days and weeks we will be addressing issues of training, staff development and recognition. Right now, we want to focus on job security. Specifically at issue is employees' access to emerging jobs in a shifting labour environment and our rights to available work in the event of corporate downsizing. We will be looking for a fair and open process on assignment and an equitable process on handling layoffs and recalls.

To develop a suitable layoff/recall model, we should consider where the organization is headed. TVO management sees a future where employees are expected to work and create on various platforms. While the traditional television products will continue to be developed and aired, new demands will mean that employees will be asked to generate content for on-line services, podcasts and other digital services. When it comes to determining rights at the time of a downsizing, our current collective agreement does not reflect the reality

of this new environment and should be changed.

In simple terms, if you have the seniority and you can do the job, you should be allowed to work where work is available. Right now, employees have rights in narrow silos based on areas of work, i.e. kids, teens and adults. These silos limit employee rights, which makes no sense in a workplace where employees are expected to think organizationally and not just departmentally, and encouraged to "build a culture of learning, sharing and collaboration, risk taking and innovation." (pg. 15, "Reaching Beyond"). The current approach also makes no sense in an environment where roles and responsibilities are going to be created on the fly.

The success or failure of TVO/TFO will depend heavily on the work and talents of its employees. We agree with at least one conclusion contained in the company's Strategic Agenda. "The time is now to harness our talent, creativity and our ambition for this organization; to innovate, to revitalize, and to raise the bar of quality in the public service even further."

We also believe it is time to make employees full partners in this enterprise. We seek fair treatment and respect for TVO/TFO employees, allowing them a return on their investment in the public service. When we meet at the bargaining table, we will expect no less.

September 6, 2006

This is the first of a few papers designed to encourage discussion among Guild members on key workplace issues. We welcome your thoughts and ideas. Contact Guild senior staff representative Dan Oldfield (dan@cmg.ca) at 416-591-5333 or TVO Branch president Carol Burtin Fripp.