

# ATB Financial: Investing in People

ATB Financial manages \$31.5 billion in assets, but the company's use of assessment tools for career development shows that it realizes that its most valuable assets are the 5,000 employees who work there.

ATB's career planning program, "Finding Your Way," serves about 200 employees each year through classes delivered in Edmonton and Calgary. "We're all about the unique people who work for us," says Jane Yakymishen, learning adviser with ATB's corporate learning center. "And part of what makes them unique is the variety of skills and goals and aspirations they bring to their jobs. Life being life, sometimes those things change over time, and we want to make sure they keep growing with us."

The program happens over two full days. The first day focuses on self-discovery, using the MBTI® Career Report and the *Career Interest Profiler*. Participants take an online *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®) assessment in advance so they are ready to go through their results during the class. "People seem to really like that piece," says Yakymishen. "It shows their uniqueness and illuminates their past behavior."

She notes that the MBTI tool was chosen because it is recognized as a world-class tool to help people learn about their preferences. "We wanted to totally support associates in career planning, and we were looking for an enterprise-wide program that had value for all employees and leaders. It had to reflect the variety of our people, who come from all places and can go to all places." The first day also gives participants an overview of the six Holland codes used in the *Career Interest Profiler*, along with activities and group discussions that give participants a chance to share as much about their interests as they are comfortable with.

The *Career Interest Profiler* (CIP) tool is used over both days of each session. "The CIP in particular gives people reflection time to sit back, then answer questions in the

workbook," says Yakymishen. "Facilitators will use their own examples from the tools to illustrate preferences and how they apply to careers."

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Learning Adviser, ATB Corporate Learning Center

On the second day, participants apply the knowledge they have gained from their experience with the two tools to explore their fit with departments and jobs at ATB. They learn more about the organization's leaders, systems, and options for further training, then generate an action plan that includes pinpointing success factors, stating a goal, and deciding on key activities to reach their goal based on what they have discovered is important to them. "It's two full days of focus on you," says Yakymishen. "People appreciate the time. But we put them to work! They come away tired but reinvigorated to put their plan into action."

Results from post-session evaluations have been encouraging. "We've had good representation from all areas and



The people development people.

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a mix of people from different areas,” says Yakymishen, “and there has been a lot of positive feedback.”

Follow-up support is another example of the program’s investment in people. Conference calls are available at four, six, and eight weeks after each session so that people can share advice and give progress updates on their action plans. “Most people do call in to the follow-up calls,” says Yakymishen. “People have a desire and interest.”

For Yakymishen, the program’s success is partly about retaining employees but also about helping people take ownership of their career choices: “They are the best judge. They own it, but we provide the tools to support them. We support people in all the different ways they like to be supported—gaining self-awareness eye-openers, not boxing themselves in, getting creative with their interests and picking up on the stuff that’s really important to them. With support, associates will be happy and will want to develop their career within ATB.”

*ATB is the largest Alberta-based financial institution: 72 years in business, 130 agencies, 167 branches, 242 communities, 680,000 customers, \$27.4 billion in assets.*

**Jane Yakymishen** has been with ATB Financial for over seven years. She presently works in ATB’s Corporate Learning Centre, which supports the learning and development of ATB associates. For the last three years she has held a position as a learning adviser with a focus on supporting career development programs. She is an MBTI® Certified Practitioner and a certified career development professional.

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