

Driving the brand vision at Mazda Canada

For Charles Spivak, being a part of Mazda Canada Inc. runs in the family. “My dad works for a Mazda dealership in Toronto and sold his first Mazda in 1976. We always got to ride in the cool cars that he brings home. That got me excited about the Mazda brand.”

During high school and university, Spivak worked summers at the same dealership as his father. While studying for an honours Bachelor of Engineering degree at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, he did a four-month co-op placement in the technical services department at Mazda Canada’s headquarters in Richmond Hill, Ont.

He enjoyed the placement so much that he wanted to work for Mazda full-time. That he had overhauled a Mazda RX-8 sports car and worked on a race team that often tested at Canadian Tire Motorsports Park in Bowmanville cemented his love of the brand.



CHARLES SPIVAK AND THE MAZDA COSMO

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Senior Director, HR, IT &
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In July 2015, a few months after graduating, he was hired for his current position as Specialist, Warranty Systems & Analysis. His day-to-day role is to improve the computer systems that record, review and process warranty claims from Mazda dealers. His second responsibility – warranty analysis – is to do monthly reports showing where Mazda Canada’s warranty costs are most pronounced, and why.

Spivak is part of a lean team of 130 employees at headquarters. Mazda Canada Inc. is a subsidiary of Mazda Motor Corporation, based in Hiroshima, Japan. With regional offices in Montreal, Vancouver and Richmond Hill, Mazda Canada employs some 150 Canadians. Recent headquarters hiring has occurred in such areas as warranty operations, parts operations and regional operations.

While Mazda Canada used to hire applicants with automotive experience specific to the job openings, now the company takes an expanded view of applicants’ backgrounds. “We look at the person’s motivation and capacity more broadly and whether they’re a good fit with our culture,” says Brian

McDougall, Senior Director, HR, IT & Administration.

The culture is collaborative and customer-focused, he says. “We’ve lowered silos and encouraged teamwork, not only within head office but with our dealer partners. By working together, it ensures everyone is aligned on Mazda’s vision and provides a consistent customer experience regardless of their position. One of the ways we do this is by providing experiential training to all corporate and dealer employees beyond their job function, so they become brand ambassadors.”

Typical of the hands-on learning was the “Soul of Motion” event that Spivak participated in last year when the 2016 MX-5 sports car came out. “In the morn-

ing, we did in-class training about the brand, and how the vehicle was designed and engineered to deliver on our brand promise,” he says. “The afternoon was devoted to driving the vehicle, so we got to compare it with some of the other models.” He was in a similar event for the CX-9 SUV earlier this year.

One of the perks of being an employee is the opportunity to buy or lease a Mazda vehicle, on favorable terms, for oneself or relatives. The result is that the Mazda Canada parking lot is full of Mazda vehicles. Spivak, who leases a 2017 Mazda3 compact, likes being able to replace his existing ride every three or four months with a new model.

He is also an enthusiastic volunteer in Mazda Canada’s many charitable activities. Last June, he ran 11.5 km as part of the company’s 12-person team in the Oak Ridges Moraine Adventure Relay Race, which raises funds to keep the trails in good condition. “I trained for it for a month,” says Spivak. “It was one of the toughest things I’ve ever done physically. But it was fun being with office colleagues in an outside-the-office environment.” McDougall agrees: “It’s a good way to bring people together.”

150	full-time staff in Canada
18	jobs available last year
1,611	job applications last year
43	average employee age

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