

Selling Social EMBERS Staffing Solutions



EMBERS Staffing Solutions (ESS) is located in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, a neighbourhood known for its struggles with homelessness and substance abuse. ESS provides temporary workers on a monthly, weekly or daily basis to a variety of positions in offices and industrial settings. Although ESS places most employees in the construction sector (90%), it also provides staffing for special events, warehousing and manufacturing. ESS is Canada's only non-profit temporary staffing agency. ESS provides workers with boots and equipment for loan, medical and dental benefits for long-time workers, breakfast snacks in the morning, counselling and support services, and certified training opportunities to advance participants' careers into full-time permanent employment.

FAST FACTS

Location: Vancouver

Founded: 2008

Sector: staffing & employment

Annual Revenue (2018): \$8.8M

Parent Org: EMBERS

Website:

www.emberscanada.org

FINDINGS

- Relationship building is necessary for success but it takes time - long-term stable partnerships are formed over years.
- Champions who believe in the social enterprise and its mission are critical.
- The development of a Community Benefit Agreement by the City of Vancouver played a significant role in getting ESS hired by notable contractors on significant projects.
- This case demonstrates the importance of a demand for the service provided by social enterprise. At the time ESS was founded, Vancouver was experiencing a construction boom, resulting labour shortage and a non-unionized construction trades labour force - all of which presented an opportunity for ESS.
- Inconsistent with previous research showing that social mission is often ranked behind quality, service and price - the organizational purchasers interviewed for this case ranked ESS's social mission as important or very important.

Selling Social: Experiences of Social Enterprises with Social Procurement and Social Purchasing presents the findings of a three-year (2017-2020), pan-Canadian research project detailing experiences with social procurement and social purchasing from the perspective of social enterprises, as well as their organizational purchasers. These 19 profiles highlight the cases presented in the book and illustrate unique features that make them of interest to practitioners, scholars and students of the social economy.

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For further information:

contact: jennifer.sumner@utoronto.ca **or visit:** https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/clsew/Research/Social_Procurement_Project.html