

RONA's OWN IDOL

RONA employees were given the opportunity to showcase their vocal talent in a Canadian Idol-esque competition in Montreal, during the 2005 Spring show.

BY TRISHA RICHARDS

No more wishing upon shooting stars for fame and fortune—RONA has helped to make its employees' dreams come true with its RONA Star contest. In celebration of its 65th anniversary, approximately 20,000 people working in RONA stores, offices, and warehouses across Canada were given the opportunity to showcase their vocal talent in a Canadian Idol-esque competition in Montreal, during the 2005 Spring show.

To dwindle down the more than 100 video entries they received exclusively from employees, RONA enlisted the assistance of a group of Canadian music industry and show business professionals to judge the blooming talents. Among the submissions, 50 semi-finalists were selected to audition live in front of the judges and belt out one tune to prove their star quality. The judges then had the difficult task of reducing the competition to ten talented hopefuls. The remaining finalists were invited to Montreal in early October for an intensive training program to prepare them for the main event. They received coaching from a team of industry professionals who schooled them in voice techniques, stage presence, wardrobe selection and dancing.

When the finalists took to the stage, their performances were enhanced by the accompaniment of musicians and back up singers. The first ever RONA Star was chosen based on votes from the audience.

Wife and mother, Guylaine Fallu, took a pause from her busy schedule as a customer service clerk at the Baie-Comeau RONA to participate in the competition and wowed the spectators with her rendition of 'Le Blues du Businessman', ultimately earning the 2004 RONA Star title. Fallu had been a RONA employee for just six months when she jumped at the opportunity to enter the talent competition on the suggestion of her boss.

There were no losers at the event's finale, as all the finalists were rewarded with \$500. However, the grand prize received by Fallu was a trip for two to Las Vegas with many additional perks and \$3000 pocket money.

Robert Dutton, president and chief executive officer, said in a letter to his staff that he knows among the people in his company, "can be found talented, true artists at heart, whose undiscovered gifts are waiting to bloom." He added that the contest was created to focus the spotlight on a yet undiscovered part of the personalities of RONA network employees.

Everyone knows the day-to-day routine of work can become somewhat discouraging at times, and staff can start to feel unappreciated. RONA has broken that mold and given its employees the chance to shine brightly.



Contest winner Guylaine Fallu who works at RONA L'Express Matériaux Julien & Frères in Baie Comeau, Québec.



Runners up were as follows: Johnny Chaulk, Shipping Clerk, Home & Garden, Calgary, Alberta ; Luc Boucher, Motorized Transportation, RONA Distribution Centre, Boucherville, Québec ; Valérie Boivin, Clerk, Réno-Dépôt, Pointe-Claire, Québec ; John Saturno, Yard Manager, RONA Cashway, St-Catharines, Ontario; Nadia Plante, Support Centre, Réno-Dépôt centre, Montréal, Québec ; Yvon Blouin, Specialized Clerk - paint, RONA Le Renovateur R.M. Bibeau Ltée, Sorel, Québec ; Andréanne Veillet Lévesque, Cashier RONA Le Renovateur Bois Turcotte Ltée, Val D'Or, Québec ; Leanne Osmond, Tool & Hardware Clerk RONA Home & Garden, Kelowna, British Columbia ; Wayne Krawchuk, Plumbing and Flooring Clerk RONA Lansing, Burlington, Ontario