

Delivra ‘Daring to be Different’

By Symone C. Skrzycki

Walk through the halls of e-mail marketing software and services company Delivra, and you just may run into the company’s esteemed founder, Fred Delivra. His legend looms large at the Indianapolis-based firm, where he’s become a cultural fixture. Did we mention he doesn’t actually exist?

“There’s an entire fake history of our company that’s taken on a whole life of its own,” director of operations Chris Nelson explains with a smile.

It all started with an April Fools’ Day company blog post describing Delivra’s (fictional) founding in 1903. The organization’s story, which now includes a supporting cast of characters, continues to unfold with staff blog contributions.

The “prank” spawned the Caught Fred-Handed program, which recognizes employees who have gone above and beyond in living up to the company’s value statements.

“We talk about wall, desk, hand,” Nelson says in describing how managers acknowledge staff achievements. “We want to put something on the (Fred Delivra) wall so everybody can see, ‘This is what it takes to be successful at Delivra.’ We’ll hand you \$250 in cash. We have a small desk trophy that you earn.”

Director of marketing Megan Glover interjects with a laugh: “It’s not a trophy. It’s a bobblehead!”

Chris Broshears, director of product development, deadpans, “It’s a Fred Delivra bobblehead. But it is coveted – as coveted as any trophy.”

Allyson Inglis, executive assistant to the management team, recently won a Caught Fred-Handed award.

“It gives you a sense of pride and it gives you a sense of, ‘We are all working together as a team to provide the best work atmosphere, but on top of that, the best service to our customers,’ ” she shares.

Delivra’s “other” founder (besides Fred) is Neil Berman, who started the company in 1999.

“At that time, that was the dot.com boom,” he recalls. “The Internet thing looked kind of intriguing to me.”

As e-mail evolved, so did the company’s offerings.

“E-mail is a commodity, and what we really try to do is sell everything around that commodity,” states director of sales Doug Wilcox. “When we get a prospect or a customer on the phone, that’s what we’re talking to them about: ‘How can we help them e-market or market better through e-mail (and) utilize those e-mails in a better, more effective way?’ ”

Delivra serves companies in multiple industries across the globe.

“Our market is the universe,” Wilcox declares.

Cultivating creativity, camaraderie

Team building is a huge part of Delivra’s culture.

“If you go through our value statements, what you’ll see is that they’re all focused on people,” Nelson emphasizes. “It’s where we put the most significant amount of our energy and effort – whether it’s prospects, whether it’s customers, whether it’s employees.”

Broshears adds, “That’s what differentiates us. There are hundreds of e-mail service providers out there, so what distinguishes us is the investment we make in our people.”

Catered Friday lunches and regularly providing

Graphic designer Abby Alexander (top) hopes for a strike at a duckpin bowling event. Lavon Temple (right, pictured with marketing director Megan Glover) is one of the latest employees to earn a spot on Delivra’s “wall of fame.”



coffee, sodas and snacks for employees offer a chance for appreciation and interaction.

“That’s a relatively minor expense when you look at the overall corporate budget, yet it does so much for us culturally,” Broshears points out. “It creates those opportunities for people to mix and socialize.”

The emphasis on people is one of the things database administrator Brent Dragoo likes best about working for the company.

“I think what really separates Delivra from anywhere else I’ve ever worked is everyone is really comfortable being who they are here,” he observes. “Everybody communicates really well. I think one of the dangers of the big corporate environment is (that) everybody gets sort of worried about the internal politics or knowing who to really follow. ... But here, if you want to talk to anybody about anything, you can just do it.”

An atmosphere of trust

Family – both internal and outside of Delivra’s walls – is a priority. Flexible scheduling and the on-site gym are two of the

benefits that assist employees.

“We have a culture that’s all about getting the job done,” Nelson shares. “We’re very focused on results. If you’re able to balance some time out of the office with meeting those results, that’s fine.”

Berman stresses, “We’re open 24/7, 365, which means that there is time outside the hours of eight to five when

people have to go to work, and because we’re asking staff to show up at two in the morning without any notice, there has to be a fairness in the hours they work Monday through Friday.”

Nelson sums up the “secret” to Delivra’s success.

“We have a very young, creative, talented staff and we let them express that however they want within the

bounds of being professional, and they do a great job,” he reflects. “I think that’s where a lot of our success comes from. We find hungry, talented employees, and we help to just kind of keep pointing them in the right direction and let them run with their ideas.”



President and CEO Neil Berman (left) serves as the inspiration for the company’s Fred Delivra mascot and for its talented team.