

By Cory Ahlersmeyer

# Diverse Staffing

## Priorities, People and Respect a Strong Approach

A business that puts the “business” behind three other priorities? Sounds like a potential recipe for disaster.

Not so, according to George Apgar, executive vice president of Indianapolis-based Diverse Staffing.

“We put faith, family, friends and work in that order,” he declares.

### Formula for success

Staffing companies are commonplace in today’s business world, and Apgar will be the first to admit that Diverse Staffing is not doing anything patented when it comes to assisting clients in filling open positions. He is proud, however, of the approach his team has developed to look beyond the technical skills required by clients.

“We have put together a strategy that we call ‘win-win-win,’” Apgar explains. “We have defined a process where you put the people first. You identify what motivates these individuals (job-seekers) and put a career plan in place that helps them achieve their goals. If you communicate that to the customer through feedback, you create a self-actualized employee.”

And this process is not just for matching job-seekers and client companies. Diverse Staffing takes this approach with its own employees.

“We use this same process for our internal staff, where it all began. It creates a very self-actualized environment because people aren’t just punching a time clock. They are working on their own personal goals; dreams for life, not just the job.”

### Adding VTO to PTO

Although workplace flexibility continues to grow in popularity and practice, some organizations still require paid time off (PTO) to be used if employees want to volunteer at school field trips or give back to the community.

Diverse Staffing offers a special approach to encourage its employees to be involved in the community: VTO, or volunteer time off.

“We pay our employees to go to their child’s school and volunteer. We pay our employees to go on mission trips. We pay our employees to do service work in the community,” Apgar confirms.

And this volunteer time is not just a couple of hours a month.

“We encourage our employees to use just as much VTO time (as they need) – and they also have PTO time. We want our staff involved in the community and involved in their families’ lives.”

Allowing employees to more effectively integrate their personal and professional lives leads to increased motivation and loyalty,

according to Apgar.

“It really pays dividends in the long run with your staff,” he adds.

### All about respect

Respect is another theme at Diverse Staffing – between new employees and old, and between company leaders and the rest of the team.

The company recently made an acquisition, something that made Cynthia Cox, director of human resources and operations, nervous in previous positions.

“I have worked at very large companies, and now a small- to mid-sized company. A lot of larger companies run through and change things in one fell swoop and move on,” Cox shares. “Instead, we spent, and still are spending, time really understanding the background (of the acquired company) and why they had the policies in place that they did.”

There is no better example than the fact that Diverse Staffing is still blending employee benefits and policies from the two organizations six months after the merger is over.

“You don’t want to just change things overnight and make people feel like they don’t have a voice,” Cox says.

Having that voice is also an important aspect of respect to Diverse Staffing.

During the holidays, each of the 14 branch offices had the opportunity to select a charity or organization they wanted to support. It wasn’t a decision that came from headquarters and, according to Cox, it doesn’t stop there.

“We’ve always been aligned to hearing from everybody,” she confirms, “no matter what level you are at. Information flows up as well as down.”

While working on her master’s degree, Cox spoke to focus groups of both managers and employees. What started as a class project turned into an entirely new pay structure – a result of that valuable employee input.

Conversations, sharing of opinions and healthy debates are not just encouraged at Diverse Staffing; those things are expected.

“We have a very participatory style of management,” Cox states. “I’ve been told a number of times to challenge George on things so that we come up with the best answer. It’s not just ‘my way or the highway’.”



Members of the Greenwood office are ready for action, while employees take part in a wrapping party to prepare donations for a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) toy drive.

**RESOURCE:** Diverse Staffing at [www.diversestaffing.com](http://www.diversestaffing.com)