



# Fusion Alliance Balance Helps Keep Talent on Board

By Matt L. Ottinger

**F**usion Alliance was just a fledgling Indianapolis information technology (IT) consulting business in 1994. Since then, it's evolved into a bustling company with over 220 employees between its Indianapolis and Cincinnati locations.

One key to the success, according to CEO/founder Doug Brown, is its high employee retention rate.

"My experience with IT professionals is they value three key things in the work they do – career enhancement opportunities, the opportunity to work with other talented IT professionals and a compensation system that recognizes and rewards their contributions," he contends.

He adds that most of Fusion's talent is local, and consultants average 10 to 12 years of experience in the field.

But it's not just its highly experienced staff whose needs are considered, Brown relays. The company features an Employer Choice Committee made up of a cross section of staffers from different departments. Its goal is to "make sure we're doing things that lead to high retention and to help employees grow."

"That includes people who have been here for different lengths of time," Brown notes. "It's nice to have a little different perspective sometimes."

Fusion also features a Corporate Citizenship Committee, and the business is involved with the United Way in addition to 15 to 20 other events and charities annually.

## Priorities in order

Brown believes that balance is critical in keeping staff happy, which is why family and home life are also nurtured by the business.

"Family is very important," Brown surmises. "We have a very comprehensive benefits plan so we can take care of our families."

Account manager Julie Sterle concurs that Fusion Alliance fuses the key aspects of work and home life.

"We have exceptional health care that's affordable, and there is a lot of flexibility that speaks to our core value of balance," she offers, noting the company's other stated core values are integrity, commitment, customer service and realizing potential.

"We call this the Fusion family and that's exactly what it is," asserts Cindy Welsh, human resources manager. "We're all working together toward a common goal. Fusion really cares and you get that feeling every day."

Health is also a common theme at Fusion. Sterle explains the company offers a wellness program, as well as a health fair in which staffers are privy to health screenings to monitor their well-being. Additionally, the company provides a reduced rate for membership to a local health club, and the initiation fee is covered.



Fusion Alliance's wellness fair gives staff an opportunity to be screened for various health risks. Human resources manager Cindy Welsh serves on several of the company's internal committees and contends that her organization promotes a true family atmosphere.

## Model company 2.0

"I get a lot of questions from peers in our industry about what we're doing right," Brown explains. "We've actually grown and gained market share during the last two economic downturns."

Brown adds that the company elevated from sixth to first in the Indianapolis market in 2001 and has remained there.

Ultimately, he contends Fusion's success is a direct reflection on its people.

"When the money gets tight, that's when you realize if your relationships and value to your customers are strong," Brown states. "And our customers have chosen to stick with our consultants due to our delivery and our track record."

Sterle shares that the company manages to thrive by focusing on both its staff and clients via a top-down commitment of trust.

"One of the things I appreciate here is that our leaders definitely conduct business with the highest level of integrity at all times," she says. "There is definitely a strong commitment to our employees and our customers."