

# Impact Networking

## Engagement, Energy, Extras Among the Perks

To walk into the Indianapolis branch of Impact Networking's sleek office space, punctuated with energetic red and black color themes, one wouldn't know the company started almost 20 years ago in far more humble beginnings – a basement with just four employees.

But what is immediately obvious is that employees are on a mission: to deliver the best possible customer service, grow the company and develop their own career opportunities.

A flurry of activity follows the weekly Monday morning meeting, as sales representatives get together with their respective team leaders and then head out into the field to work with clients and make prospecting calls. They'll gather again on Friday, for a day in the office and weekly training session.

The technology showroom – each of the company's 12 branches across the Midwest has one – is full of copiers and office machines, equipment that is integral for business process automation. Impact Networking's mission is helping clients streamline and manage their documents and data.

The company that Frank Cucco started in 1999 with three friends (they all still work there) is headquartered in Lake Forest, Illinois, and employs nearly 400 people.

Other markers show the company's achievements: 11,000 clients served and a 93% client retention rate (the industry average is about 60%). Also, 27% year-over-year growth and the potential to double current annual revenue and become a \$100 million company by the end of the year. A second Indiana branch, in Hammond, came online in February.

The strategy for success involves employees at the top of their game and having access to the tools available to make the customer happy. To that end, each employee has a review twice a year.

Cucco attends every single one of those reviews. For 400 employees. Twice a year.

Fred Green, service manager at the Indianapolis office, couldn't believe that fact either, until he walked into his own review and saw Cucco.

"The top guy puts it on his calendar. I



Business process automation company Impact Networking has grown to 12 locations and over 11,000 clients served in the almost 20 years it has been in business. Fun perks and company-wide trips are offered to all employees.



was shocked, I walked in and there he was. 'Frank! How ya doing?' he recalls.

### Engaged leadership

Green has been with the company about 18 months, but has years of experience in the industry.

"If your people are very satisfied, and very motivated, they're going to go out and radiate that to the customer," he notes.

The value of customer satisfaction is continually proven from the top down. It was a customer's anger over a problem, and Cucco's subsequent response – meeting with the customer personally and offering his card

with his phone number and the request that the customer give him a call anytime – that ultimately sold Green on Impact Networking.

"The customer was speechless. I thought, 'This is support.' And Frank drove right back (to Illinois). Just class," Green recalls.

Indianapolis branch manager Matt Curless points to the independence afforded to him as a mainstay for the company's success and his personal satisfaction.

"Frank gives me the autonomy to run this branch how I need to in order to increase our goals and revenue. You get a lot of freedom. Luckily, I've grown the branch from \$1 million to a \$3 million branch," he offers.



One of the company’s signature community service initiatives is Letters to Santa. The Indianapolis branch partners with Latino Community Development to provide toys and other items, and the general manager dresses up as Santa Claus with associates handing out gifts to local children.

### Work hard, move up

Promotion from within is another vital strategy. Jon Voytilla is a good example as he started as a sales associate out of college. Three years later – at age 24 – he became a branch manager (he and Curless are both branch managers and sales team leaders in Indianapolis).

“It’s a company you can grow with,” Voytilla says. “I know I’m with a company that’s growing and I’m growing myself.”

A focus of Impact Networking’s recruitment efforts is a young pipeline of talent. Of the branch’s 25 associates, 13 were millennials in 2016.

When Michael Cucco was 16, he started in his uncle’s company by sweeping floors and performing warehouse duties. Fifteen years later, he’s worked his way through the ranks to become the Indianapolis Strategic Services branch manager and company partner.

“We look for talented, motivated individuals and we do a lot of recruiting right out of colleges ... we have a very good relationship with the local colleges and universities around our branches,” the younger Cucco explains.

The company’s 2015 voluntary turnover was less than half the industry average. The recruitment philosophies play directly into its success at retention.

“We’re looking for people who want a career. We want people who are looking to succeed, get promoted and find success. ... There are no surprises and it’s all performance-based,” Cucco adds.

### Perk-ing up

And we can’t forget about the perks.

An annual all-company trip, for instance, is one of those times when – if the company meets its goals – everyone qualifies (or has a chance to take a cash buyout to take their own family vacation, etc.).

“It keeps everybody moving in the same direction,” Cucco notes. “We’ve been to places like Puerto Vallarta, Cabo, Puerto Rico.”

The quarterly all-company meetings offer a chance for employees to come together and socialize, learn about the state of the company and have a chance to win prizes (Apple watches, TVs, Beats headphones)

– or cold hard cash inside the Impact Cash-o-nator (where a team member collects money blowing around inside a glass box).

Sales staff have company cars and technicians are provided with vans, as well as clothing items needed for all seasons.

Employees pick out Rolex watches on their 10th anniversary. A new addition is the five-year anniversary gift of a \$2,000 gift certificate to Tiffany’s & Co.

The perks – and the camaraderie that is built around getting to know co-workers through incentive trips – reinforce Impact Networking as a place where young salespeople are attracted.

Voytilla, a former college football player, sees potential for other former college athletes that maybe don’t know what they want to do next after graduation.

“This company does make that transition a lot easier, from a culture standpoint, the fun stuff we do, the camaraderie. There’s something to be said about that, and I do think people choose to work for Impact because they can sense that pretty early on,” he asserts.



The company’s onboarding process includes a two-week “boot camp” for new hires. Time spent in the organization pays off with gifts of jewelry on five- and 10-year anniversaries.

**RESOURCE:** Impact Networking at [www.impactmybiz.com](http://www.impactmybiz.com)