

# SkillStorm

## Backing Up the Words

By Symone C. Skrzycki

The room is abuzz with activity at SkillStorm.

Music plays. Call bells hail triumphs – whatever the magnitude. Headsets are home to animated discussions.

Adorning a wall are bold, orange images of core values – passion, customers, fellow Stormers (moniker for SkillStorm’s internal team), work and play, tenacity and winning.

SkillStorm assists its clients with information technology needs – either through on-site personnel or cloud solutions. Headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, it has a presence in several states (200-plus employees nationally) and one location in Indiana.

“As far as on a daily or weekly basis, yes it’s a grind,” acknowledges executive vice president of recruiting and delivery Brian Harris. “The conversation you’re having with folks is the same – it’s just about different technologies and different projects. But to incentivize, we’ll do daily awards, weekly awards and biweekly contests. Those rewards are chosen by our employees.”

A young team of Stormers comprises the Indianapolis office. The age range is 23 to 33.

“We’re very strategic on who we bring in, not only from a skill set (perspective), but you have to fit our culture,” Harris relates, pounding on a table for emphasis. “Not everybody does and that’s OK. But we have to get it right from a hiring perspective. We don’t want turnover; nobody does.”

### Sandwiches, sports and ‘sprints’

Sports lovers find like minds at SkillStorm. Excursions range from bowling and golf competitions to spectating at college and professional basketball games.

“The majority of the employees here have been collegiate or professional athletes,” Harris reveals. “It goes back to time management, work ethic, commitment. It works well for what we do and it’s translated very well.”

To streamline communication among

teams across various locations, SkillStorm conducts daily company-wide ‘sprints’ – 10- to 15-minute daily virtual conferences.

“It’s extra buy-in because you know everybody else from the different offices,” Harris asserts. “We’ll award employees in front of the entire organization, so there’s a big hoopla. Everybody likes a pat on the back.”

Staff embraces community service opportunities as well.

“We do a number of different things. The most recent one was helping local food pantries,” Harris imparts. “It’s as simple as we bought cases of bread and peanut butter and jelly, and took an afternoon of doing nothing but delivering food for folks that are in tougher situations than most of us.”

### In their element

“It may be loud in there,” Harris cautions good-naturedly upon entering the open work area. “What we do is nonstop on the phones.”

As he steps away, Daniela Tarailo smiles

and offers a chair. Confident and affable, the resource delivery manager has been with the company for three-and-a-half years.

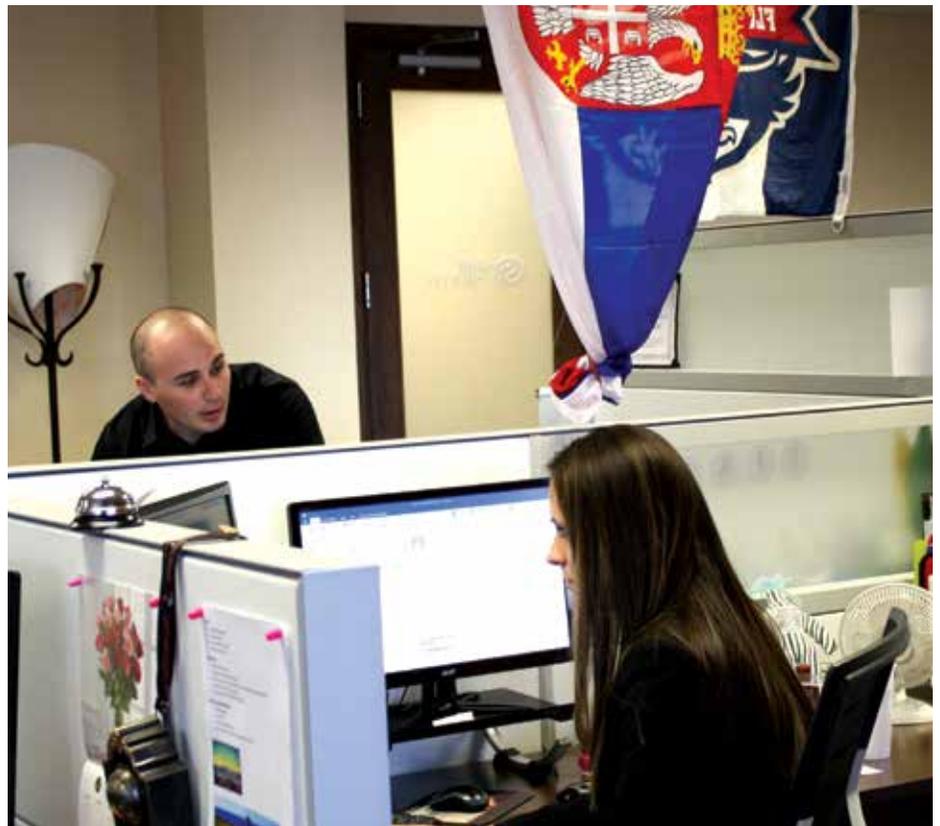
“This was my first job out of college,” she recalls. “I didn’t have experience other than family business and internships in the summer. What made it stand apart for me was the big, family-oriented environment. I played competitive college basketball and I liked that we could go ‘head-to-head’ and compete, but still root for one another and win as a team.”

Technical recruiter Brittany Miller sits a few feet away.

“Everybody’s really close and I enjoy coming to work every day,” she observes. “The culture is awesome.”

Abruptly, a beaming Harris emerges from his office.

“Miss Brittany has been delivered some awards today!” he declares. “Here’s your Rookie of the Year award and your Dream Team award.”



Team lead recruiter Vinnie Pellecchia and resource delivery manager Daniela Tarailo are two of SkillStorm’s fastest-rising employees.

The latter will honor Miller – thrilled by the recognition – and other top performers with an all-expense-paid trip to Costa Rica.

Nearby are two of the company’s newest Stormers: recruiters Zach Ashton and Chiara Schum.

Floating above Ashton’s work station is a black and white striped helium balloon. It carries one word: Celebrate. He’d joined the team one week prior.

“Everybody is friendly,” he comments. “It’s laid back. You don’t have to feel self-conscious about asking for help.”

Peers also extended Schum, an employee since February, a heartfelt reception.

“Brian likes people to start on Fridays,” she recalls. “Everybody was really welcoming and feels like family already.”

### ‘Hybrid of opportunity’

Technical recruiter Scott Adams carefully chooses his words when voicing his affection for SkillStorm.

“If I had to sum it up in a phrase, the thing that sold me on this company was the ‘hybrid of opportunity’ that’s there and the rewards that come along the way,” he reflects. “You’re not siloed into a pre-defined track. They allow you to make it what you want it to be.”

Moments later, applause erupts as Harris unveils one last surprise.

“I have an LTCV (Living the Core Values) award!” he proclaims, heading straight for Vinnie Pellecchia. With the company for just over



“We’ve got to make sure we’re working our tails off, but at the same time, we’re going to have fun doing it,” remarks executive vice president of recruiting and delivery Brian Harris (back row, second from right).

a year, he’s already been promoted to team lead recruiter.

Grinning as Harris walks away, Pellecchia shares a final thought.

“He’s probably the best boss I’ve ever worked for. It’s nice when you go to work and you have a boss that’s obviously on you for production, but also cares about you on a personal level.”

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