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Best Places to Work In Indiana





C.I.K. Enterprises, LLC

Game Plan: ‘Work Hard, Play Hard’

By Rebecca Patrick

Banners hang from the rafters. Victories are cheered. New goals are set.

These descriptions typically conjure up images of a thriving sports team, but they are also part of the fun, winning culture created at C.I.K. Enterprises, LLC, a fast-growing Indianapolis print and direct marketing company that has taken the notion of business as a game to a new and very successful level.

“I firmly believe that people are naturally competitive and people want to win. We focus on the fact that this is a game – one where employees know the score,” offers Andy Medley, chief operating officer and co-founder of the company along with CEO Scott Hill, his best friend from Hanover College.

“They see all the numbers and know all of the expenses, from rent to office supplies. We show them exactly how things work and consider everyone here a member of a team. We function as one unit striving toward a collective goal – company success – that benefits each of us.”

In its five years, CIK – which began as Tri Auto in 2001 and then added Trace Communications in 2004 – has grown from two employees to 60 and from \$750,000 in sales to \$22 million. Last year, CIK was tapped as the area’s fifth-fastest growing private company by the *Indianapolis Business Journal*, and *Inc.* magazine ranked it 58 on its list of the nation’s fastest-growing private companies.



Small/Medium Companies



C.I.K. Enterprises, LLC

Description: C.I.K. Enterprises, LLC is comprised of two divisions – Tri Auto and Trace. Trace specializes in the wholesaling of full-color printing, mailing and other revenue options, focusing on relationships with newspapers and ad agencies. Tri Auto specializes in the marketing of direct mail and newspaper inserts to automobile dealers and automobile sale event teams.

Primary Indiana location: Indianapolis

Web site: www.triauto.com

Full-time employees in Indiana: 60

Part-time employees in Indiana: 0

Average salary (non-exempt): N/A

Average salary (exempt): \$58,000

Job applicants last fiscal year: 486

Job hires last fiscal year: 41

Employee incentives

In March, CIK’s rapid rise culminated with new digs, which Medley calls “our stadium.”

Beyond this new home, which includes an exercise and weight room, an indoor basketball goal and plasma television in the break room, success is measured in a variety of real ways for employees.

One perk is company stock. Quarterly bonuses are another appreciated incentive. Last year, each employee earned a total of \$6,000 in bonus money.

“Scott and Andy don’t have to do that, but it’s their way of saying thank you for what we do,” says Aaron Benson, CIK talent director. “However, it’s not something we automatically expect ... we know we have to work to get it.”

Consequently, an unmistakable part of life at CIK is goals. Fun game boards, including one reminiscent of Monopoly, adorn the walls and serve as both reminders and motivation for individual, department and company achievement.

Hand-in-hand with that is another CIK cornerstone: recognition. As you walk into the headquarters, you immediately notice the MVP banners displayed high above. Each quarterly MVP gets his/her name put on a banner and receives a big trophy and a championship belt. The MVP also gets to pick a prize from a “secret book” that has many different rewards in it, including a two-night trip to Las Vegas.

Departments are also rewarded when they meet quarterly goals. One example: the legal department selected a hog roast as its prize of choice.





To foster camaraderie, everyone at CIK has a cubicle instead of an office — including co-founder Andy Medley.

“We are big believers in momentum. Once you get that positive momentum going, you want to do everything you can to make sure it continues,” Medley states.

All the spoils serve to reinforce the many things employees are doing well.

“It’s all about creating exceptional customer service. That’s the number one reason we’ve grown so fast. We are not doing anything different than any company in America; we are selling print, and print has been around forever. The thing that we are

hopefully doing different is people who deal with us get a more talented, energetic person on the phone,” Medley describes.

“We’re not stupid. What we’re doing is not that fun, to be on the phone all day. So, we make sure that we provide an atmosphere in which, if they want to, people can get up and go hang out a little bit, get some things off of their mind, and then sit back down and get to work.”

This environment has fostered employee enthusiasm and dedication. “It’s such a huge benefit – knowing that you can come here and be yourself. We play games, we have fun, but we work hard. And, we like working and it is fun for us,” offers Stephanie Summers, a marketing consultant with the Tri Auto division.

Benson concurs. “When I came here, I was really shocked at the energy level. It made me want to be a part of it. It makes you work that much harder when you see everyone around you working as hard as you are.”

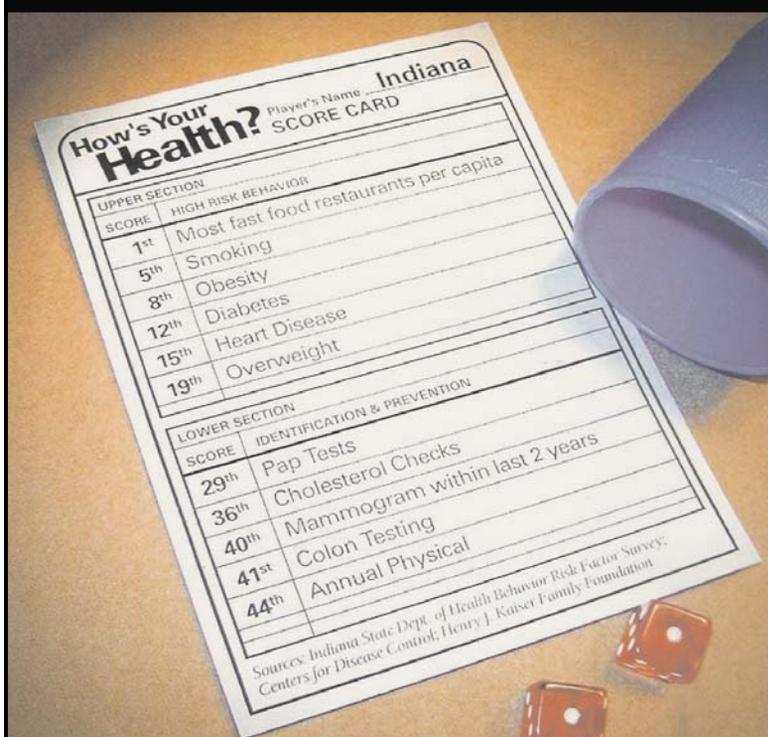
Vision and respect

The company’s inclusion philosophy is another contributor to deep employee buy-in. Talk around the office about gross profits and how to do even better are not uncommon.

“They would never be talking about that and never understand what we were trying to do, if this wasn’t easily accessible information. It’s always at their fingertips (via a company extranet),” Medley states.

That’s exactly how he and Hill want it. “When Scott and I were starting the company, we wanted to make sure it was

It’s a lot more than a numbers game.



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MVP Megan Mills shows off the CIK trophy and championship belt for employee excellence.

based on what type of company we would like to work for. We were young, but knew what we wanted and didn't want," Medley remarks.

"My dad always kept me in the loop about business when I was working for him. I knew what was going on, and I knew how much money we were making.

"Meanwhile Scott, who was working for newspapers, had no idea how much they were making and he didn't know where he stood. Basically he wasn't part of the game, so it wasn't fun for him."

Two credos they live by: use common sense and think long term. They also believe in their employees and let them do their jobs.

"We have an intense desire to not have control issues; we are very trustworthy with the people we hire. They have performed at a high level, and we have allowed them to perform. That's another reason we have grown so much," Medley concludes.

CIK's management style is indeed a big hit with employees. "Part of what makes it so fun here is that we all know what the vision is and what we can do to help us achieve our goals," enthuses Ali Austin, a Tri Auto marketing consultant.

Adds Summers, "Because they share information with us, we feel respected. The communication between us and management is easy and open."

The annual company retreat is a prime example of the value placed on employee input. "During one session, they split us into groups and ask each group to think of an idea that will better the company," Summers explains. "We give a one-minute synopsis of our idea, and then Scott and Andy have 30 seconds to say 'yes' or 'no.' For me, this is the coolest part about working here.

"It's just amazing to see what opportunities lay ahead for you professionally and for the company as a whole. If you work really hard, you know that it will be noticed and that there will be opportunities for you in the future."

Comments like those and industry recognition are music to Medley's ears. "A lot of what we do is designed to challenge and reward people because retaining talented people is one of our ultimate goals," he states. "Anything that solidifies the fact that we are doing that is just great!"



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