

ARCO Design/Build Midwest

Sabbaticals, Service Just Part of the Story

By Brenda L. Holmes

When Landon Paddock returned to his office in early March, he couldn't wait to get back to business as usual.

"I almost booked an earlier flight from Florida last week, because I was ready to come back," Paddock laughs.

But this wasn't an ordinary three-day weekend or trip to see old friends. Paddock was returning after a 30-day sabbatical from his duties as vice president of ARCO Design/Build in Indianapolis.

Ben Titus, also a vice president, explains the program.

"After five years of employment, every associate gets a 30-day, paid sabbatical. This was implemented back in 1992 when they founded the company. Back then it was for a half dozen people; now ARCO has over 1,000 employees. We're still doing it today, and we get a stipend (\$5,000) to encourage us to travel."

The sabbatical program is one component that helped the organization make its 2020 debut on the Best Places to Work in Indiana list.

Paddock sings the praises of the program after experiencing several planned excursions and a heavy dose of family time.

"They (ARCO) want you to go unplug, recharge ... don't answer work emails. Don't answer calls. It gets you to recharge and refocus. By the end of it, (you think) 'I've got to do something. I haven't done anything but travel, eat out, hang with friends or drink some beers.'"

Paddock says it was a wonderful way to make memories.

"Our kids are young, so we took them to Disney. This really is an awesome opportunity they provide. And I wouldn't say they 'provide it'; they require it. It's not like somebody can go, 'Yeah, I don't want to do it. I've got too much going (on).' You have to do it. You have to go do your sabbatical."



The "Work Hard, Play Hard" mantra on display.



Senior project manager Corey Rose shares his scenic destination, near Glacier National Park in Montana, during his sabbatical.

Comprehensive approach

The brand has been in Indianapolis for seven years.

"ARCO was founded in St. Louis in 1992 and soon thereafter opened an office in Atlanta (in 1995)," Titus explains. "It has steadily added new office locations ever since. We now have offices in over 20 major metropolitan areas and (are) adding more

online in 2020. We are a national design/build contractor that has completed projects in over 450 cities nationwide."

The Indianapolis office is the base of operations for 18 individuals, and the company is looking to hire.

ARCO specializes in industrial and commercial building solutions. This includes warehouses, distribution centers,

manufacturing, cold storage and speculative commercial buildings.

According to Titus, in the traditional construction world, an owner hires an architect and engineers.

“You got civil engineers, structural engineers, MEP (mechanical, electrical and plumbing) engineers, and put them all together and they manage the process. They’re all separate contracts, trying to organize the meetings and keep people on pace,” he explains. “The design/build method is an expedited manner to get your project from start to finish.”

Titus believes the ARCO model is best for the customer and employee.

“When the owner goes out and hires us – a design/builder – we manage all of the other people, those consultants, their schedules, holding them accountable. Essentially what you’re doing is cutting costs. It’s the idea of a single source contract for you, the owner, to manage – one contract and one point of responsibility.”

All about the service

Putting the focus on customer service and keeping expenses down has encouraged clients to hire ARCO for multiple jobs.

“We have a 90% to 95% repeat customer ratio,” Titus says. “This happens because we are singularly focused on delivering a superior construction experience through our design/build delivery method.”

Senior project manager Mike Armstrong takes pride in knowing customers are coming back again and again.

“We get the repeat businesses because we view ourselves in the customer service industry, not in the construction industry. That’s how we approach our clients, experiences and relationships,” he continues, adding that sharing resources also brings more opportunities to all employees.

“A lot of people think of this group as like family,” Armstrong

offers. “We’re actually a really large company. We share resources, HR, legal and accounting. But the office is very tight knit. You get the benefits of that support structure, but then you get the feel of working in a small company (the local office). You are not just a number.”

Preparing the team

ARCO is constantly investing in employees through education.

“We have weekly, monthly and biannual training that keeps our team up on the leading techniques and trends in the construction industry,” Titus shares. “Safety is a big priority for us. We want everyone that comes to work to go home that night safely and unharmed. We reinforce this with regular talks and training on safety for both office and field associates.”

Twice a year, the organization brings its field-based superintendents around the country together, as well as all the project managers, for instruction.

“For two days we do nothing but get up early and train hard. We mix in a fun team-building activity. Our culture is one of accountability, transparency and fun. We understand (that) we need each other to be successful. When you work with this understanding, it’s easy to have fun because you’ve worked closely together,” Titus adds.

Keeping it fun

Alex Hahn, senior project manager, says it’s hard to pinpoint one or two reasons why ARCO is a great place to work.

“For me, I guess it’s like a conglomerate of everything – the day to day and the culture here. It’s just very laid back,” he contends.

Continued on page 72



Employees Drive Our Success

In 2020, Oak Street Funding® is once again one of the Best Places to Work in Indiana.*

We owe our success to our employees' diverse talents and commitment to those we serve. The Oak Street Funding team supports our customers with customized financial solutions to provide a:

- Reliable source of capital
- Partnership that is responsive to their needs
- Transparent and easy lending process

So we can help support our customers' businesses today, and their success tomorrow.

*for the eighth consecutive year



Visit oakstreetfunding.com to learn more.

ARCO Design/Build Midwest

Continued from page 63

He does mention that one of his favorite events all year is Boat Day, a pure distraction away from the office.

“It’s a lot of fun to get out on a nice summer day and not have to worry. It’s a lot of good team building honestly. We’re all out on a boat, put our phones away for the most part and just get to spend the day together and not worry about work.”

Fellow senior project manager Corey Rose also looks forward to Boat Day.

“We kind of reset and get out of that work mentality,” he states.

The office has a casual industrial feel and there are several amenities available to de-stress and recharge during the work day.

“We play ping pong at 5 o’clock if we’re going to work late,” Rose adds. “We’ll stop, take a break and do that for 20 or 30 minutes, and we can work a little bit more. We’ll play a few games at lunch. So, we definitely work hard to keep it fun.”

A giant “Work Hard, Play Hard” sign covers an entire wall in the breakroom.



Teams working in the field earn Jobsite of the Quarter recognition.

“‘Work Hard, Play Hard’ is a mantra of ours at ARCO,” Titus emphasizes. “We go beyond these words to create an office environment that’s fun and engaging for our team with ping pong and shuffleboard tables, a beer tap in the breakroom and activities that bring our team together.”

And office pranks can get pretty

elaborate, especially for those returning from their sabbatical. When Paddock, an avid golfer, walked into his office upon his return he found a putting green complete with turf, a hole and a pin flag – not to mention several buckets of sand covering the floor. A cutout of his face was also added to several posters and photos.

RESOURCE: ARCO Design/Build Midwest at www.arcoadb.com