

# CSPRING

## Where Caring Fosters Success



By Anthony Schoettle

Make no mistake, Indianapolis-based CSpring is a technology company through and through. And it's a good one.

By all accounts, the company has a sterling reputation. It provides data strategists, engineers, analysts and visualization experts who help organizations move faster – from defining scalable data strategies and building reliable pipelines to delivering dashboards and analytics that drive better decisions.

But oddly, some might think, the first thing the company's president and owner Cynthia Pizarro contemplates when interviewing prospective employees is not necessarily their technical savvy.

"It's easier to teach people technology than it is to wire them for integrity or deep caring for people," Pizarro says.

"In technology, you want the best talent, but if you settle on people who are just technical ... they won't always fit. We have very clear interview questions to establish a cultural fit."

That's emphasized due in part to two early occurrences in Pizarro's professional career.

When she graduated from Miami University of Ohio with undergraduate degrees in marketing and management information systems in the 1990s, Pizarro was hired at a Fortune 500 company, which she said was not a great place to work. "It was a great group of people, but (the company was) not people focused," she explains.

Two years later, she landed at a consulting firm that "was very people focused."

Fast forward to 2006 when she started her own business then acquired the majority share of CSpring (then Critical Skill) in 2010. Her experience taught her what kind of company – and company culture – she wanted to build.

"When I started scaling CSpring, that (the consulting firm where she previously worked) was the company I wanted to be," Pizarro recalls. "I loved it there. I felt cared about and supported. I am a people-first person, and I wanted people to feel what I felt. ... We're nothing without people to

support our clients and support each other. I'm wired that way."

At CSpring, they call their community "Ohana" – the Hawaiian word for family.

"That's not a slogan, but a shared standard for how we work together," Pizarro imparts.

"Ohana means people are known, supported and trusted while also being accountable to one another and to the work we deliver. Being part of CSpring's Ohana comes with meaningful benefits and shared responsibility: Employees are expected to contribute, take ownership and lead with integrity."

### People-first philosophy

Guided by a people-first philosophy, CSpring intentionally invests in its team's growth, well-being and development, with company leaders believing long-term success is built through trust, clarity and care.

"In an industry defined by pace and pressure, this balance of high expectations and genuine support allows our people and our clients to succeed," Pizarro relates. "It's a culture people choose to be part of, and choose to invest in, over the long term."

That's certainly the case for Isaac Brown, a help desk analyst at CSpring. He's been with the company six years and says he can't



Giving back to the community – and building team cohesiveness and morale – through various charitable initiatives is a core focus at CSpring.

imagine working anywhere else.

But he admits, during the interview process with CSpring, he thought all that was promised about working at the growing firm “was too good to be true.”

After all, Brown had experiences with a dozen previous employers, and he’d heard it all before. But this time, it was different – and the pledges he heard from Pizarro and other top CSpring leaders were as strong as steel and as true as morning light.

“I’ve never wanted to be a stronger representative for a company because of who they are and what they do,” he says of his feelings for his employer.

The last six years, in some very substantial ways, have been tough for Brown. In a two-week period, he suffered a heart attack and the loss of his mother due to a heart attack.

After his own health scare, Brown spent three days in the hospital.

“By the time I was out (of the hospital), the company sent out an email offering free heart screenings to its employees,” he recalls.

After his mom died, Pizarro met with him personally. “She was very protective of me, as she is with all the employees. She advocated for me and for my health.

“Every day I get up, no matter how hard work is, I’m proud to stand behind Cynthia’s and CSpring’s banner. I want to follow this leadership,” Brown remarks earnestly.

## Tried and true

Brown isn’t alone in his conviction.

Christine Martin, a CSpring senior consultant, joined the company in 2013 – and she says there’s a constancy to the firm’s people-first approach.

“I felt Cynthia was warm and caring right from the start, during the interview,” Martin relates. “As I got to know her more, she’s a spiritual person as well. She shares that – and she lives that out. She’s not pushy, but she shares it. That’s something that drew me in.”

It’s not just Pizarro that exudes compassion and support at CSpring.

“It’s a very positive culture that really tries to build up every single employee,” Martin stresses. “We come together as a group. We share knowledge and pool strengths to make each other even stronger. We’re supported in any kind of challenges we may have. That’s supported from the top of the company on. Cynthia walks the walk and that trickles down.

“I’ve worked for a lot of companies, and you don’t always get that. In fact, you could say you rarely get that. This is a pretty unusual place – in the best way.”

Something is definitely working at CSpring.



CSpring designates a charity each quarter to collect donations and items for and to contribute through volunteer work.

In addition to being a fixture on the Best Places to Work list since 2021, the company – which has 52 employees – is in growth mode, adding clients and employees that are drawn to the firm’s culture of caring like a magnet.

A selfless, pragmatic approach to problem solving is another big client draw.

“I think what resonates most with our customers is that we use a business-first approach,” Pizarro offers. “Everything about us starts with business and people. Technology just enables all of that. We’re not just pushing what we do, we’re focused on what customers need. And then they meet our people who reflect our values.”

Founded in 1996, the company rebranded to CSpring in 2012, with the C standing for the company’s four core values: committed, collaborative, consultative and caring. The Spring part of the moniker, Pizarro explains, is meant to harken the season – a time of growth and fresh energy, a machine spring – full of positive energy, and a refreshing spring of water.

“I don’t think we could have captured a better word to describe our culture. From the moment you walk into our office, it is a very positive environment. People are jovial. People enjoy each other. We are go-getters, but we have fun too. There’s just a warmth about our relationships.”

## Spotlight on employees; having fun, giving back

CSpring leadership is not shy about recognizing its employees’ part in the firm’s success.

The company formally recognizes workers’ outstanding efforts and achievements

during quarterly all-company meetings. Acknowledgments also happens in real time, not just in formal forums. Wins and milestones are celebrated through Teams, Paylocity shoutouts, emails and personal notes, “making appreciation visible, timely and genuine,” Pizarro relays.

Exceptional client feedback also is shared companywide to recognize impact and build pride.

Pizarro has an initial reaction to the company’s growth that might be somewhat different than many chief executives.

“The more we grow, the more we can give,” she says.

CSpring designates a charity each quarter to collect donations and items for and to contribute through volunteer work.

“They support the charities we support,” Martin relates, “and allow us to volunteer without taking time off. Charity is something that’s very important to Cynthia, and she and the entire staff here really embody that.”

There’s time for fun at CSpring too.

Each Thursday, employees step away from client work to connect for a happy hour that prioritizes relationships over deliverables.

Quarterly family outings include employees and their families, acknowledging that work and life are deeply connected. “They extend our culture of care beyond the office, strengthening community, belonging and long-term connection,” Pizarro notes.

CSpring’s holiday celebration brings employees and a guest together for a special dinner. “It’s a meaningful pause to celebrate accomplishments, express gratitude and reinforce pride in the work we’ve done together,” Pizarro concludes.