



The essence of Impact Networking is embracing change. This is the second time Impact Networking has been a gracious recipient of the Perfect Image Award of 'Dealer of the Year.' Although it is the same award as five years prior, the Impact Networking story of success has been revisited and retold time and again. Dealer of the Year: Impact Networking

Through the story of a small-town Wisconsin boy visiting the city for the first time; through the voice of a suit salesman that started with Impact Networking more than 13 years ago; through the 20-year-old looking for a change; through the experienced competitor. Each story putting into context the opportunity of which they took full advantage, reworked to express years of unique experiences and tone of whom the story belongs—in this case, not to the CEO or President, but to the 'Fearsome Foursome.'

Ambition meets Opportunity

While highly-competitive employees bring self-motivation and drive to the equation, success is ignited when those innate characteristics meet the purposefully constructed environment of opportunity and empowerment— values established at Impact's inception almost 15 years ago.

Impact has strived to create an environment that challenges employees. One that recognizes and rewards individuals for their contributions to the team. One where sharing the effort and contributing to the success of others is more highly praised than the success of the individual. One where employees lose the 'it's not my job mentality.'

'Fearsome Foursome'

How has Impact Networking managed to instill these values in employees?

By creating a culture that supports and values growth and advancement: so much so, that when Cory Carnes reached the highest sales position, senior level, he could not go any further. The small-town Wisconsin graduate started entry-level at Impact right out of college. His first time traveling to the city was for the interview. With a background in IT, and little more sales experience than what he gained at his previous bartending gig, he moved to the city for his first career job. Starting with no accounts, no experience and few expectations- he is promoted. First to associate level, then associate level II and finally senior level. Continually exceeding his goals, the partners create an additional senior level II position so he can get the promotion he deserves. Six business cards and 10 years later, he is managing the busiest branch at Impact in the Chicago loop.

By developing a culture that rewards ambition and the ability to produce results higher than prior experience or tenure: the kind that gave Richard Ray, who started working at Impact as a young 20-year-old entry-level sales rep, the chance to work his way through the ranks. Ray began working inside sales at General Binding at age 18. Two-years later, one of his contacts told him about a small but expanding company called Impact Networking. Looking for more opportunity, he joined the small team of 10. After three years of commitment he is given the first major account, becoming the company's first national sales representative. Fast-forward eleven years later, he is now managing the Brookfield office.

A similar story of success belongs to Robert Fisher. The communications student graduated from college and began selling suits at Nordstrom. After being informed that his acquaintance's brother was starting a new business, he decided to take a gamble. If he was going to switch careers, now was the time to do it. He began working at Impact Networking in its infant stage, when it was just six months old. Thirteen years and many job titles later, he has been named Regional Manager based out of the Impact Networking Waukegan office.

By providing the type of culture that challenges employees to take on responsibilities, sometimes outside of their typical day-to-day tasks, to continually reinvent and evolve their skills: the type that helps develop the interests of employees, even if not included in their immediate job description. Chris Zvirbulis began at Impact as a sales manager after eight years of experience with a competitor. He was brought in to help build-up an under-performing branch. After successfully turning that branch into a top-performer, his opportunities continued to evolve.

"I was asked to remodel the Darien office," said Zvirbulis, "I did everything with very little involvement from Frank (Impact CEO). I negotiated the lease with the attorney, I found an architect to plan out the space... at other companies I was never involved so closely with the general operations of running a business. There have been many career growth opportunities."

Impact of a Culture

The four managers described above, nicknamed 'Fearsome Foursome' for their relentless and aggressive approach to winning deals, were chosen by Impact President Dan Meyer, CEO Frank Cucco and Vice President of Sales Tom Pieters to accept the 'Dealer of the Year' award at the ITEX conference. The four were chosen based on their ability to adopt and reflect Impact's values, mission and vision as their own; meanwhile writing individual stories of success.

This is yet another action demonstrating the Impact commitment to recognition and reward. It's a good strategy. The four, all employed at Impact for at least eight years, have attributed their loyalty to the company's culture.

When asked why he has stayed at Impact for so long, Carnes replied, "It's definitely the culture and success I have been able to achieve. I have been mentored throughout my career and all my hard work has been rewarded appropriately. My expectations of what I would get out of this company have always been exceeded. This is something I try to pass onto my reps."

Ray agrees, "It's always having a voice. There is an extremely open-door policy within our company. No matter what, you are encouraged to bring ideas forward and are rewarded for doing so."

It's not just the top-performers at Impact that have noticed it is a great place to work. Since 2008, Impact has been named to Crain's Chicago Business Best Places to Work list in 2009, named to the Chicago Tribune list of Top Places to Work 2012, named to the Best Places to Work in Illinois five times, and named to the

Chicago region, 101 Best and Brightest Companies to Work For, from 2008-2012 and nationally in 2011.

Impact execs work hard to create a team-oriented culture. It begins with transparent communication of company financials and goals for the future. Much of this takes place at quarterly meetings, with all 156 employees in attendance. At every meeting employees from each department are recognized for their hard-work through awards, gift cards and raffles. This past March was an especially good month, as all employees took a trip to Mexico as a reward for reaching the 2012 incentive goal. Despite employees missing two days of work in March— that was Impact's highest revenue month, ever.

"It's the pride and ownership that each of us feels in the company," says Fisher, "If you talk to anyone at the company, we all know the goals. From admin to warehouse, sales, etc., everyone knows what needs to be done. The CEO and President do a great job of communicating with every employee, making each one feel they play an integral role in the success of the company."

An Innovative Approach

Impact attributes their 93 percent client retention rate, and more than 350 reference letters lining the walls around the corporate office, on their strong team of employees and their ability to develop innovative products and services. As equipment is still the main sales focus, Impact has strengthened their ability to be a total Solutions Provider. There are Managed Print, Document Management and Production Print specialists assigned to each 8-rep sales team, bringing value-added consulting to any sales solution. Impact continues to leverage their in-house solutions team to develop innovative products and services for customers.

In 2013 each new Impact customer will receive a custom web portal to access Impact contact info, along with corresponding equipment models and ID tags. Customers can now seamlessly place service/supply calls right from that page with a simple click. Their Creative Services Group has added social media and internet marketing packages. Impact employee training and education remains the most thorough in the field. Impact technicians have reached Pro-Tech certification status, granted only to the top 8 percent of Konica Minolta dealers.

"We will continue to focus on customer retention, utilize our internal resources, and continue to focus on our winning culture at Impact," says Carnes.

While focusing on winning strategies of the past, Impact will continue to develop innovative tactics for the changing industry and continue to invest in employees. Looking forward, Impact plans to add two new sales teams by the end of 2013. Although honored for being recognized as 'Dealer of the Year,' Impact is determined not to become complacent with their success.

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