



Building a strong employee culture is key to Con-way's success

The spokes that support the wheel of this \$4.3 billion transportation giant are many, but at its hub is an employee culture that drives Con-way Inc.'s success. At this freight transportation and logistics services conglomerate, employee culture is unique and stands apart from the competition thanks to a dedicated infrastructure based on the company's values of integrity, commitment and excellence.

Con-way's development of a clear, uniform engagement and recognition program has helped employees work together to deliver consistent customer satisfaction.

"Before we established common culture management, each company did its own

thing in terms of employee recognition and engagement programs," explains Con-way's Pat Jannausch. "Because our companies can and do share customers, it's beneficial for us to have similar cultures because employees—from front-line to executive management—often work together. So while this idea of a common culture based on common values may not be important in other companies—with separate organizations within—it is important here."

In 2005, the firm based in Ann Arbor, MI walked its talk by promoting Jannausch from her senior role in human resources to her current position as vice president of culture and organization development. She manages the company's culture development

initiatives, which include employee recognition and engagement as well as broad training and leadership development programs.

Con-way Inc. is a publicly traded company comprised of 27,000 employees. Its companies operate from more than 440 locations across North America and in 18 countries across five continents. Considered a leader in the transportation and logistics industry, its primary companies are Con-way Freight, Con-way Truckload and Menlo Worldwide Logistics.

Inspired by Disney's professional development workshops, Con-way executives launched their own program. The results were far from Mickey Mouse

to say the least. In fact, the 1999 rollout of Con-way's "Star" employee recognition program was pivotal given the highly competitive dynamics within the transportation industry as well as the more recent economic challenges of the past year. "Con-way's culture affects its ability to recruit, engage and retain employees," says Jannausch. "The bottom line is our culture both attracts and retains employees as well as customers. How do we know? They tell us."

way values. "In the course of a quarter, it's common that these nominees get lots of Star Cards," says Jannausch.

QLAs are automatically nominated to the third step, the President's Award. This recognition is more prestigious because of its exclusivity. This selection takes place after the close of the fourth quarter. A banquet celebration and awards presentation are held to honor candidates.

Presidential award winners become

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PAT JANNAUSCH

The company's employee rewards program involves four progressive steps with peer recognition being a key factor.

Step one is a Star Card Award, which is given by anyone to anyone for exhibiting outstanding job performance. This peer-to-peer reward could see a truck driver reward a member of management or vice versa for exemplary work. In 10 years, more than 750,000 Star Cards have been exchanged.

The second step is known as the Quarterly Leader Awards (QLA). These crystal awards are given to employees who "consistently and persistently" model Con-

candidates in the fourth and final step, which is the annual CEO Constellation Award. This exclusive category honors the best of the best and is the highest and most prestigious award a member of the Con-way organization can receive. Only five employees win this reward per year, which includes a cash award and a two-day retreat with the CEO and company presidents.

In the second quarter of 2009, culture coordinator Kari Brodzinski was selected as a QLA winner. Being recognized by a number of her peers evoked a multitude of emotions that only served to reinforce and bolster her positive feelings about working for Con-way.

"Just to read the things they wrote about me made me teary-eyed and embarrassed and excited and proud and I couldn't wait to go home and tell my husband," says Brodzinski, who's worked at Con-way for four and a half years. "I'm a lucky girl in that I work for a company that has this program in place and puts so much importance on it."

Each Con-way company builds culture-related expenses into its budgets for hard costs, such as QLA trophies and celebration refreshments, and soft costs, such as staff time used to plan celebrations. According



to Jannausch, it is the cost of doing business in today's world and the company doesn't measure the expenditure at an enterprise level.

To describe Con-way's return on investment (ROI) on the program, she prefers to use an analogy: If a hotel was to order new furniture for its lobby, hotel staff would not be asked or be able to present direct or specific ROI on the costs of the new tables and sofas.

"They add to the ambiance and perception of quality of the place and join many other elements to attract and retain customers," she says. "Our recognition program is like that." **rop**

Con-way Inc. is a \$4.3 billion freight transportation and logistics services company headquartered in San Mateo, CA. Con-way delivers industry-leading services through its primary operating companies of Con-way Freight, Con-way Truckload and Menlo Worldwide Logistics. These operating units provide high-performance, day-definite less-than-truckload (LTL), full truckload and intermodal freight transportation; logistics, warehousing and supply chain management services and trailer manufacturing. Con-way was established in 1929 as Consolidated Truck Lines.

