

Express Information Systems

When Express Information Systems formed as a Partner organization in 1989, the goal was to build a company where people would want their own children to work. Iris Schimke, the company's founder and president, wanted to create a beacon for attracting and keeping great people. Almost 20 years later, that initiative is still relevant as the average employee tenure is nine years and eight months.

Through the years, the Microsoft Dynamics™ GP, Microsoft Dynamics™ SL and Microsoft Dynamics™ CRM focused Partner organization has grown organically, adding one client at a time, with Schimke focusing on the business in general, and her business partners Keith Schimke and Cheryl Aceto focusing on the consulting and development group.

Perhaps one of the most interesting things about this organization is that they resisted the “go vertical” direction from Microsoft Corporation.

“The reason for that is because of our employees and economic issues,” says Schimke. “If the vertical takes a down turn, so do you.”

Instead they have embraced an understanding of technology as a tool that can be leveraged. That philosophy has created an aspect of diversity within their client base, which ranges from customers in industries from not-for-profit to healthcare to food service. Some clients have solutions that are straight out-of-the-box while others use a customized tool for every module within the Microsoft Dynamics™ solution. In turn, that diversity and problem-solving opportunity have created an environment that has been beneficial to customers and enriching for consultants.

“Our consultants love crafting solutions

to meet unique needs,” remarks Schimke. “The reason they stay around is that they’re able to stay fresh in their roles.”

In addition to the variety within the client base, consultants also have a lot of variety in their day-to-day functions. One of Express Information Systems’ calling cards is to create and deploy consultant teams to give customers the best of breed when it comes to their solution implementations.

These teams are made up of “veterans” and new employees from a variety of ages and geographies. According to Schimke, this formula makes it easier to bring on new employees because they do a “ride along” and serve as a member of an implementation team to see the tempo of engagements and get a vision of what they can do within the Express Information Systems team structure.



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“This helps them to be a little freer to experiment with where they belong in our group, rather than working as a single consultant on an implementation,” concludes Schimke. “It also changes how we engage with clients and who they connect with at different organizations. Some accounts really like more mature consultants and others prefer a more youthful age perspective.”

To discover what would work best with a customer, Express Information Systems has the sales and consulting groups work together to get to know an organization’s personal-

ity as well as what the customer expects as far as support during the sales cycle.

“Because we are using the consulting group to make those recommendations, there is a greater sense of trust based on being recommended rather than thrown in to get billable hours up,” says Schimke. “Many times consultants don’t recommend themselves for the job. They truly look beyond themselves and recommend the best resources.”

These steps along the way have not only made for a great working environment and successful business, but also for numerous customer – and prospect – references.

“We want all customers to be referenceable, and we take steps in that direction,” shares Schimke. “For example, we have a ‘go live’ pizza party when a customer goes live with their implementation. This party features a reference book where they can record their experiences and kudos. This activity makes them feel like they’ve signed off and have really been part of the team.”

Following the party, customers have the opportunity to share comments (which are kept confidential and not shared with employees) that are used in making management decisions on how the company modifies their processes. A secondary effort is to encourage clients to engage in the Microsoft Customer Reference Program.

“Our customers often serve as references to prospects, and we’ve even had prospects who serve as references even though we didn’t complete the sale,” says Schimke. “I’ve taken interactions like that to be very positive on the reference side.”

Very positive indeed. With this type of focus and process on their side, Express Information Systems has a bright, customer-centric future in their sights. 