

Handling human resources is the province of Providium

The Daily Messenger – Jan. 29, 2008

The complexities of doing business in a global marketplace include finding the right people for the job

Perinton, N.Y. -- Marylane Bianchi is a people person. So is her business partner, Elaine McKenna. And from the looks of their swank offices on Woodcliff Drive, they've done pretty well for themselves.

They live in Victor and Bloomfield, respectively, and are managing partners of Providium Human Resource Group LLC, which claims to offer the widest range of human-resource services in upstate New York. Each has more than 20 years of experience and a national clientele.

Their company was formed in 2006 and included the acquisition of Weterrings & Agnew Inc., a long-established human-resource company in Rochester. It is part of Providium Consulting Group LLC, housed in the same building, with additional offices in Buffalo and Kansas City, Mo.

The Woodcliff Drive offices are sleek and contemporary. Top-tier executives would no doubt feel right at home.

Businesses that can afford to do so outsource the kinds of tasks Providium provides. They hire such a company to do the executive searches, handle the labyrinthine process of global relocation, the intricacies of payroll, taxes, audits and the law.

What's regarded as a colossal headache for some has become the niche of Providium, which has 16 employees.

"We cover the entire employment life cycle," said McKenna. "That includes benefits, organization, training, recruitment, compliance and affirmative-action laws."

Because needs vary from company to company or project to project, Providium bundles services to accommodate them. One firm might want A-Z, another just A, B and C.

That flexibility is an asset, McKenna said, and it includes contracting for temporary services.

For example, Arnold Magnetic Technologies in Rochester closed its operations in Wayne, N.J., while expanding headquarters in Rochester. "You don't just go out overnight and hire 80 people," said Mike Kaser, Arnold's chief financial officer. "They helped us with recruitment — that includes salaried and factory workers."

In addition to recruiting, Arnold technologies had Providium look at all of its HR functions in New York, Ohio, Nebraska and Illinois.

"They are very responsive; in fact, they are so responsive, they're ahead of us a lot of times," Kaser said.

David Drake, a vice president at Baldwin Richardson Foods Co. in Macedon, said Providium evaluates Baldwin's annual affirmative-action plan and also does some head-hunting when new executives are needed.

"Providium has strong community ties, and they understand the community's needs," Drake said.



Elaine McKenna, left, of Bloomfield, and Marylane Bianchi of Victor are managing partners of Providium Human Resource Group LLC. Their boardroom overlooks Woodcliff Drive in Perinton (Photo by Rikki Van Camp)

For medical-equipment maker Welch Allyn in Skaneateles, Providium crafted a global employee benefits package and an HR plan. "There are true cost savings in what we do — it's not just about convenience," Bianchi said.

Proving how spending money on human-resource services saves a company money is a challenge that must be tackled with each new client. "They don't know what they don't know" is a phrase they use to explain the learning curve inherent in their business.

"I like developing a rapport with clients so we become a single, trusted source for what they need," Bianchi said.

Of course, they can't do that by themselves. Both women give extensive credit for the company's success to their employees, some of whom have decades of professional experience, evidenced by their networking skills and contacts.