



#1 - Large Company

ONEBRIDGE

MAKING THE CRITICAL CONNECTIONS

By Matt Ottinger

South Carolina native Bill McLellan had spent over a decade in St. Louis before uprooting his family of six several years ago to come work as a health care analytics solutions architect for Indianapolis-based Onebridge.

Perhaps a risky endeavor for some, he asserts the move “has really paid off,” citing the collaborative work setting and collegial atmosphere. Flanked by an acoustic guitar in his home office, McLellan characterizes the harmonious environment found at Onebridge.



“There’s not a rivalry like I’ve experienced at other places,” McLellan remarks. “Everybody is willing to help and give appreciation but not care if they get appreciation or not. It’s the best team I’ve worked with and I’ve been doing this for 18 years.”

COVID-19 has admittedly put a pin in social gatherings, but McLellan notes the virtual coffees and Happy Hour get-togethers have helped mitigate the social distance.

Onebridge, one goal

It’s not all fun and socializing, however, as Onebridge has steadily ascended from its beginnings (in 2005) as SmartIT. The name change came when the company expanded from staffing to a more robust technology consultancy. It now employs over 250 between its internal and field operations.

“The data industry has evolved,” explains Christina Nash, chief people officer. “Our clients relied on us more heavily from a consultative perspective and that precipitated a desire to rebrand. . . . We found we could support clients from anywhere and found value in housing a team here in Indianapolis.”

Onebridge is now a full-lifecycle data consulting firm that has served clients in sectors such as health care, life sciences, manufacturing, financial services and government. Identifying an opportunity to best meet those client needs has paid dividends as the organization continues to grow and become a go-to resource in its field.

“We were successful in doing more transactional work in staffing, but that’s not how our leadership wanted us to grow,” Nash notes. “They wanted to provide more value and focused on the team and hiring smart people with a high degree of expertise.”

Bridging the talent divide

In the modern tech industry, a highly qualified job seeker may receive many offers – spanning various locales. In fact, Nash reveals, “Technology unemployment hovers around zero percent and has for as long as I’ve been in it.”

Pivoting toward a culture focus has placed Onebridge’s vacancies among the most highly coveted.

“We did struggle when our culture was less well-defined and less focused on engagement and building teams,” she concedes. “But now, we’ve been very fortunate to attract the best talent away from our competitors.”

Maintaining a position on the Best Places to Work in Indiana list multiple years running has helped recruiting as well.

“The Best Places designation is something applicants have referenced and it’s something (CEO) Paul Rothwell takes pride in and talks a lot about,” Nash points out. “It’s enabled



Company get-togethers and after-hours fellowship are why Onebridge staffer Bill McLellan says the company has “the best team I’ve worked with.” Employees look forward to reconvening in-person post-pandemic.

him to connect with other business owners and learn from them. It's a piece of the puzzle of who we are."

Furthermore, it symbolizes the compassionate leadership Onebridge displays.

"We hear that people feel very appreciated and respected," Nash reports. "They have an opportunity to grow and a high degree of trust in the leadership and direction of the company. We get high marks in leadership, integrity and availability. We also give people feedback and opportunities for professional development."



Now an employee-owned company, Onebridge staffers will experience direct returns as business success collectively benefits team members and their families.

Amy Smith has been with Onebridge for nearly six years and asserts the company's culture makes her job as a senior technical recruiter a rewarding experience.

"The culture has been different here compared to previous jobs at larger companies," she compares. "It feels like more of a family, and that goes from leadership all the way down. The office was a great place to be (before COVID-19), but now virtually they've found ways to keep us all involved and connected."

Her enthusiasm for the company is paramount in her role.

"It helps as a recruiter that I'm passionate about the company," Smith adds. "If I weren't, it would show when I'm talking to people. I'm able to speak on my experiences, but it does help to have the (Best Places to Work designation) to throw in too."

Time and money

Additionally, staff become employee-owners through the company's Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), which Nash cites as another motivating force to maintain focus on working together to benefit

themselves and the families of all involved. She says the ESOP is a relatively new benefit but believes "people will start to see those statements and the fruits of our labor."

As a staff accountant, Courtney Kvachkoff can certainly crunch the numbers. She rejoices in the ESOP opportunity.

"We are all now shareholders of a company we know and love," she proclaims.

Unlimited paid time off (PTO) is another amenity striking the right chord with Onebridge staff.

"That allows me to visit friends and

process for incoming staff.

"I'm working closely with the onboarding team and human resources training and looking at potential changes," he conveys. "They gave me an opportunity to help facilitate some of those onboardings for other employees."

Transcending silos in the workplace also helps promote a collaborative atmosphere, according to Kvachkoff.

"In typical work environments, accountants talk to accountants, developers talk to developers and so on," she outlines. "You cling to the people you're most comfortable with. At Onebridge, I can look to each department, point out at least one member and tell you a little bit about them."

Fellowship, and a little friendly competition, keep things lively as well.

"It's the company events that bring us together and allow us to get to know each other on a deeper level," Kvachkoff adds. "That even extends to our leadership. How many (workers) can say they've sat across a table playing euchre against their founder and CEO?"

"We lost, by the way," she admits. "He's pretty good."

Bridge over troubled water

No matter the standing or culture of an organization, challenges persist.

"We've had a positive cycle in building this great team but still have competitors hiring within tech – and that's a threat," Nash reveals. "It's another reason for us to treat people the way we do – to prevent that from happening."

"We're up in the value chain but continue to compete with outsourcing and IT firms overseas," she continues. "That's a challenge but we're able to overcome that by being able to relate to our clients in a different way – providing business strategy, technology strategy and enablement you just can't get with overseas firms."

Navigating a pandemic posed an obvious obstacle.

"We have a tightknit team that was often in the office together and relied on face-to-face interaction," Nash reflects. "But we sent everybody home right away and figured it out. We took a safety-first approach. We were in the process of a Microsoft Teams implementation, so that was helpful."

Whether it's a pandemic, a tight talent pool or helping a client address a daunting hurdle, Onebridge remains prepared for a bright future anchored by internal support.

"We have a high degree of confidence in our team to fight adversity and thrive," Nash declares.

family whenever the opportunity presents itself," relays Kvachkoff, noting the company encourages workers to "recharge." "It's incredible to compare to other companies and realize the burden of planning out your year – and counting your remaining PTO hours is no longer a concern."

Nash adds, "We trust team members as adults to take time off when they need it."

Open sourced

Communication is a critical skill for Asad Sabree, who serves as a business intelligence developer. He provides reports on client projects and plays a major role in the creative development process with a focus on the end user. Sabree has been on the Onebridge staff for nearly a year and credits internal communication as helping the company "stand out."

"Our leaders do a great job of communicating through different avenues," he emphasizes. "Some written communications have turned into a video recording based on feedback (from staff)."

Incorporating his ideas goes a long way for Sabree. As a newer employee, his feedback has been sought in perfecting the