

# MAKING CONNECTIONS

*Working World finds the right fit for local employees, businesses*

By STEPHANIE N. GRIMOLDBY | Photos by NANCY MERKLING

When Nancy Wenzel was in college, temporary staffing companies were in their infancy.

But her mother, Barb Kalemba, a secretary for a staffing company in 1980, saw a bright future in the field. She bought the rights to her company and, armed with a recipe card box filled with names of women she knew could type and file, she began filling office jobs for local businesses through her newly-named staffing services company, Working World.

Today, Wenzel and her brother, Jim Sales, continue Kalemba's work. They have a staff of 13 between their two offices – one in Crystal Lake and one in Fox Lake – and they employ between 300 and 375 field workers.

Despite the company's success during the last 37 years, Wenzel – now president of Working World – and Sales have made a conscious decision to stay local.

"I think it's important for us to keep good workers here in the community," says Wenzel, who lives in Lakewood. "If people are working local, they're prideful of the company they're working for because they know it's in their community."

## ■ FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

Working World focuses on placing candidates in industrial/factory positions, mid-level clerical positions and mid- to upper-level management positions, which fits well with the jobs McHenry County offers, Wenzel says.

Most are temp-to-hire positions in which a company has an opening to fill but wants the opportunity to "try before they buy," Wenzel says.

"Even though skills are important, fit is more important," Wenzel says. "You can pretty much train anyone to do anything, but [employers want to] take the time to assimilate that person into the culture."

In those situations, workers remain Working World employees, and companies pay a small fee on top of employee hourly wages to Working World.



When the city of Marengo recently needed to fill an open position, officials decided to hire an employee based on a trial period, says Jenny Snelten, finance director for the city.

Because the city had never gone that route before, Snelten called upon Working World for assistance, and it's been a seamless process, she says.

"The process of recruiting someone can be so time consuming, and they took all of that off of us," she says. "All we had to do was re-interview the final candidates ... [they said] here are three to four candidates to suit your needs. It was just served on a silver platter, if you will."

## ■ A GOOD RAPPORT

Working World has come a long way from a recipe box filled with applicant names. Today, the company shares job postings on social media sites, and interested candidates interview for a position with Working World staff.

Some of Wenzel's staff are 20-year veterans, and their longevity has produced a good rapport with customer companies, she says.

"We're a good go-between ... candidates and the customers [whose positions] we have to fill," Wenzel says. "The customers trust us. They've worked with us for years and if we say, 'You've got to see this lady, she's exactly what your firm needs,' they know we know what we're talking about."

Dan Schultz, controller at Serv-All Die and Tool Company in Crystal Lake, has worked with Working World since August 2015 and says their rapport is strong.

"We've gotten to the point we don't even need to interview the employees because we trust them enough," he says, noting Serv-All has hired dozens of hourly workers through Working World. "[If we say] we need a machinist, they can find someone."

At the end of the day, that's what Wenzel enjoys most – finding the right job for local people.

"It's really rewarding to put someone who hasn't worked for a while - maybe [they] raised a family or just hadn't had to work ... in positions close to home, in our community," she says.



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