



# A Bit More on Culture From My Interviewees

I have written hundreds of articles for Office Technology magazine through the years, but I have not written an article in the past focused specifically on company culture. So, I am overdue. For this issue, I interviewed owners of three BTA member dealerships on the topic: Applied Innovation, based in Grand Rapids, Michigan; Document Solutions Inc. (DSI), based in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Fisher's Technology, based in Boise, Idaho. Two of these companies immediately came to mind since they have presented on company culture at past BTA events. The third was recommended to me. All three are great companies.



Here is how it works. When I interview someone via Microsoft Teams for an article it is recorded and transcribed. I then read through the transcription as I listen to the recording, highlighting certain quotes from the interviewee that I think would be especially good for the article. From there, I prepare an outline and write the article. The thing is, unfortunately, I never can use all of the interview content within the article, due to the limited amount of space in the layout. With that in mind, below are some additional comments and details that were not included in this month's cover story that I believe will be of interest.

■ **Applied Innovation:** In my interview with Casey Lowery, he referred to an initiative in place at Applied called Else's Shoes. As you can imagine, when he said that I first pictured the shoes of someone named Elsa. I quickly understood as Casey explained that employees meet quarterly with five other employees, spending half an hour learning about what each person does for the company and who he (or she)

is as a person. "So, we call it Else's Shoes," he said. "The goal is to see what it's like to be in their shoes." Applied has been doing this for several years and has had around 300 employees spend three hours a quarter learning about some of their teammates.

■ **DSI:** A couple of years ago, DSI implemented the use of Nectar software, which I see the vendor promotes as "employee recognition software to build great culture." Jocelyn Gorman explained that employees receive points that they then give to other employees. As those awarded points add up, they are redeemable for merchandise by way of an online store. For example, an employee may notice another employee "representing our selfless service" and award him some points. "So, on a day-to-day basis, everyone is finding ways others are reflecting and living out our core values," she says. "It's really neat and people love it."

■ **Fisher's Technology:** In my interview with Chris Taylor, I asked about the payoffs of a strong company culture. He listed four:

- (1) It assists in the hiring process. "If the culture is so strong and obvious, they [a job candidate] will know if this is where they want to be."

- (2) If the culture is a good fit, the new hire will "feel at home," which helps with employee retention.

- (3) It aligns the employees around the shared core values of the company, allowing them to cohesively strive for the same strategies and goals within the culture.

- (4) Given that the employees are aligned around the same "culture, values and mission," it allows for "healthy disagreements" as employees "respectively explore their differences to come to more innovative solutions."

I would like to share even more from these great interviews, but just like with the cover story, once again, I am out of space. ■

— Brent Hoskins

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### FLASHBACK



The association's magazine cover 49 years ago this month — the NOMDA Spokesman, October 1976.