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LARGE COMPANY CATEGORY



## Small acts, big investments drive Hinkley staff satisfaction

By Matthew Broderick

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When Meg DeLeo, an office administrator at Hinkley Allen, joined the Hartford law firm last July, she noticed similarities to other firms where she's worked: good benefits, hard work and a strong client focus.

Since then, DeLeo says she has come to appreciate the subtle differences that make her new employer special to her.

"The managing partner sends frequent emails, mostly a thank you message to

employees," DeLeo said. "He's the top person in the firm and is very busy, but it's the [positive tone] of the message [that I like]."

For the 60 employees of the firm's Hartford office, which opened in 2008, it is those little things — alongside a culture that promotes empowerment, skill development and collaboration — that has fueled employee satisfaction and loyalty.

David Rubin, the managing partner of the firm's Hartford office — one of six northeast-based regional offices — said he understands that making employees feel valued drives a positive workplace culture.

"Our senior management is strongly invested in creating and maintaining the Hinkley Allen culture," Rubin said, noting the firm's partners regularly solicit feedback from employees to make improvements. "We truly listen to what they have to say; we embody the behaviors and attributes we believe to be at the core of our firm," Rubin said.

Jean McCarthy, a legal secretary who's been with Hinkley since 2008, says she feels empowered at the firm to discuss any issues or suggestions. "I've never felt that what I had to say didn't matter or was irrelevant," she said.

McCarthy points to the firm's staff committee, which she has served on, as

an example of that empowerment. The committee, comprised of all levels of employees, coordinates the firm's charity and volunteer events.

In addition to helping build internal workplace relationships, committee members also volunteered on community projects including at a local soup kitchen, cleaning up a park, supplying kids with backpacks, and providing Thanksgiving meals for disadvantaged families.

For Rubin, providing opportunities to balance work and outside activities — like volunteering — is an area where his firm excels.

"In the practice of law, it isn't unusual for firms to pile on the work and expect employees to toil long and hard," he said, "but we recognize the need for a quality life that includes time to enjoy family and participate in outside activities that fulfill us as people."

Equally important to Rubin is his firm's investment in skill development.

"We choose our employees carefully and are dedicated to employee development to help our people be successful in their work," he said, noting the firm offers a range of opportunities from formal education and outside seminars to membership in relevant associations and internal mentorship.

As a result, Rubin explained, a number of attorneys and staff have been with the firm from 20 to 40 years.

But success is not all the firm celebrates, according to DeLeo. "We have a birthday celebration with cake for all [employees in the office]," she said, explaining that firm-wide social gatherings — like a monthly lunch courtesy of the firm — foster better working relationships with co-workers.

"It's an opportunity for everyone to gather together," DeLeo said. "And when you know each other better, you work better together."

McCarthy agrees. "The best part of being at Hinkley Allen is the working relationship I have with the attorneys I work for," she said. "It's more of a partnership than a supervisor and subordinate; I am respected as a valuable member of the team." ■



Hinkley Allen staff take in a ball game.