

MAAG

THE MAGAZINE

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Member Spotlight: Prisma Graphic

Sarah Sudar, Copywriter, Printing Industries of America

Technology has changed the way printing is done. Presses are faster and digital presses have become even more automated. Because of this, not as many people are needed on the printing floor. Where they are needed is in customer service and sales. Here, you need to exceed the customer's expectations.

According to Jennifer Decker, Prisma Graphic's Director of Client Services, customer expectations keep evolving, especially when companies like Amazon can deliver in two days or less.

"These client expectations have made an impact whether we want to believe it or not," said Decker.

Prisma prides itself on its customer service and the attention to detail that CEO Robert Anderson implemented when he purchased the company in 2000. Since taking over, he has led it through an evolution—from a traditional, high-end boutique printer to an all-inclusive marketing solutions provider. Prisma has grown its sales from \$1 million per year to \$40 million in 2017.

The success of sales is directly proportional to Prisma's employees and their client service and sales training, an extensive program that can take trainees from three to 10 years to complete.

"I look at companies who hire salespeople and want them to produce reasonable revenue in six months to a year with no experience, but it just doesn't work that way," said Anderson. "You don't build a sales team overnight."



Anderson added that printing used to be fairly easy, but when you add data analytics, marketing supply chain, portals, digital printing, and pick and pack, it becomes a very complex business. If a company thinks they can train someone to sell a complex business in a short amount of time, it's unrealistic.

At Prisma, each trainee goes through an in-depth, personalized program. They start off by working through all of the departments, learning the business, and then rotate to the online division and learn customer service. Before moving into outside sales, they take on a role in customer relations, where they receive mentoring under a seasoned professional. This model creates a seamless transition, so as employees retire, the trainees taking over already know what the client expectations are.

“Most of the people in this industry are Baby Boomers, and we’ve worked really hard to bring in a lot of young people and train them to work with them as they retire out,” said Anderson.



Some of Prisma’s best people have come up through the program, and it isn’t limited to those in customer service and sales. Whether their role is as a driver or executive, all employees participate in extensive training to better understand the workflow of the company.

Prisma places a high value on their people and recognizes their team members as part of their success. They purposefully look for people who bring a



different vision to the workflow, which includes hiring from inside and outside of the print industry. For any job to be a success, it begins with communication. The team has to be able to inform customers and coach them on the logistics of mailing or how to use a marketing supply chain portal. If an employee doesn't communicate well or isn't focused on the customer experience, customers have many other options to choose from. Decker said people remember relationships and they will come back to the ones that serve them well.



Anderson wants team members who are in it for the long term, and he is willing to invest in them at the beginning and take the time to train them well. He looks at it as: "I have 200 families that I'm responsible for, and my greatest personal success is to watch them buy their first house, put a kid through college, and make sure they are happy."

When Anderson took over the company, there were 28 employees. Many are still there with several having been there for over 20 years, and one pressman just celebrated his 38th anniversary. He doesn't want to have a high turnover and seeks to hire employees invested in the vision of Prisma with a passion for growth.

"When we interview, we tell candidates, 'We want this to be your last spot, but not somewhere you feel stuck,'" added Decker.

Prisma is an ever-evolving media company that is focusing on the future, constantly pushing ahead while continuing to always focus on the customer. The plan for 2018 is to find a location east of the Mississippi and shift 45 percent of their online work from its Phoenix campus. With this addition, Prisma will have better logistics for distribution for east coast clients.

"When I look at how a 21st-century printer operates, it's all about logistics," said Anderson. "Anyone can print, but in 2018 it's about having the right people who can execute the logistics and partnerships that help their clients' businesses continue to grow."

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING?

Check out the Customer Service Professional (CSP) Certification on the iLearning Center that Prisma's Jennifer Decker helped design. This online certification will help individuals deliver outstanding customer service by teaching them vital skills in the areas of professionalism, communication, client management, and how to navigate job production situations.

Learn more at <https://www.printing.org/ilearning>.



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