



# EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2012

*Achievements in Human Resources*

Graphic by Douglas Kraft • Photos by Todd Vanhook

HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS are often the unsung heroes of an organization. They work to find new talent and keep existing workers happy. They tackle benefits questions, office strife and countless other issues that crop up on a day-to-day basis.

These days, HR staffers have risen to new levels of responsibility. They work on organizational goals and alignment, promote wellness and workplace development and occupy a seat at the decision-making table.

For the first time, *Columbus C.E.O.* magazine sought to recognize Central Ohio's best and brightest HR professionals as well as the organizations that are setting trends and establishing best practices. The result is the HR Excellence Awards: Achievements in Human Resources.

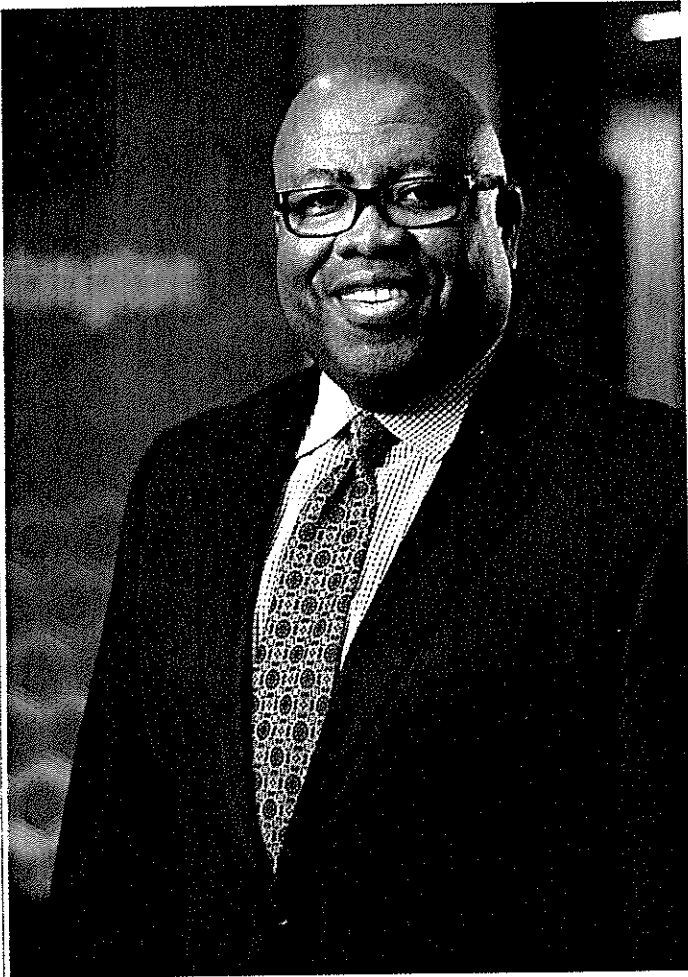
We sought nominations from readers earlier this year in six categories: Executive of the Year, Best Practices, Cutting Edge, Lifetime Achievement, Good Works and Future Leaders. Some awards are based on the size of the organization where the individual works: large (more than 2,000 employees), midsize (500 to 2,000 employees) and small (fewer than 500 employees). Organizations could be public, private or nonprofit.

Nominations were compiled and sent to a four-person independent selection committee. Each member reviewed the nominations and chose a winner and, where applicable, finalist in each category.

Winners and finalists will be honored at a special Aug. 2 reception at the Franklin Park Conservatory & Botanical Gardens.

## EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

### LARGE ORGANIZATION



### KEITH SANDERS

*Senior Executive Vice President,  
Human Resources Director*  
**HUNTINGTON NATIONAL BANK**

KEITH SANDERS may have grown up in Winter Haven, Fla., watching his parents work blue-collar jobs, but he learned from them gold-standard skills.

Sanders' father ran his own lawn-care business, and his mother was a maid. They showed him both the value of hard work and the need to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and that no one is better than anyone else.

Those traits have led Sanders to the upper echelon of management at some of the nation's most recognizable organizations, and have enabled him at each stop to foster a culture that promotes diversity and puts employees first.

"I have always wanted to be in an environment where I could help people, in terms of them being treated fairly, and, along the way, provide the opportunity for development," says Sanders, senior executive vice president and human resources director at Huntington National Bank.

A graduate of Florida Atlantic University with a bachelor's degree in business administration, Sanders started his career in Atlanta with Federated Department Stores Inc.—now Macy's Inc.—as a buyer in men's sport shirts, and was ultimately offered a promotion. The problem: It involved a move to New York, too far from his family.

So Sanders was instead invited to take on a training role at Macy's, which served as his introduction to human resources. "Having the view of a buyer, I knew the importance of selling and the sales approach," he says. "And by training people as new hires, we could start with a focus on customer service from the first day."

Sanders spent 14 years with Macy's, rising to regional director, before being recruited to Target, where he expanded his skills in employee relations and diversity.

He recalls working in Target's Tifton, Ga., store, which even in the late 1990s was heavily segregated and had the worst employee survey rating in the company. In 20 months, Sanders guided it to become the second-best-rated store in the organization by listening to employees, leading by example and showing that the company valued and respected people.

After five years, Sanders joined PepsiAmericas as chief diversity and inclusion officer, and on a global stage continued his quest to advance a company by treating its people with dignity and respect.

Two years ago, Huntington came calling. The bank sought to make a cultural change to an inclusionary, high-caliber workforce that reflects the customers

it serves and the communities in which it operates. Sanders, his co-workers say, was perfect for the job.

"Keith is a tremendous leader," says Zahid Afzal, a senior executive vice president and chief information officer at Huntington, who nominated Sanders. "When he came here, we didn't have human resource services other than internal generalists who were benefit focused, but did not have a focus on talent development, or being creative in providing services to our colleagues in terms of benefits. There was zero inclusion of diversity in the company.

"With Keith, it is a night-and-day difference in the services we receive and the environment of the company."

*"I have always  
wanted to be in  
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help people."*

## EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

### MIDSIZE ORGANIZATION

TAMMI NANCE-SPAYDE had found a good niche at Riverside Methodist Hospital. OhioHealth's tuition assistance program had helped her complete her sociology degree from Ohio State University, and she was on the ground floor of the new Patient Relations Program to promote patients' rights, ultimately becoming its director.

But she thought there might be a job that was even better suited for her interpersonal and administrative skills. A session with a career counselor introduced Nance-Spayde to a career path that seemed to be a perfect fit: human resources.

"Variety was a key factor for me," says Nance-Spayde, vice president of corporate human resources for OCLC. "I love working with people. But I am also very tactical and analytical, so benefit design and compensation management appealed to me. I like to develop those models and do analysis. In this role, I am allowed so many different opportunities."

Nance-Spayde served as vice president of human resources and organizational development director at Riverside before being recruited to lead human resources for Metatec International, which later became Inoveris, a high-tech manufacturing organization.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks curtailed the tech sector and Inoveris hit some bumps in the road, Nance-Spayde moved to Dominion Homes, where she worked as senior vice president of administrative services, human resources and operational development. In 2005, as the economy began to impact the housing market, she made the leap to OCLC, which al-

lowed her to further enhance her people skills in the international climate she had first experienced at Inoveris.

"Tammi has to interact with human resource professionals in the 10 different countries where we have offices and make sure whatever the workplace location, those employees are just as motivated and excited as anyone here in the Dublin headquarters," says nominator Jay Jordan, OCLC's president and CEO. "Tammi is a consummate human resources professional—the best I've worked with in a rather long career."

"One measure of human resources in any enterprise is how it is viewed by the employees. Tammi has been excellent in ensuring this is a great place to work, and an inclusive place to work."

OCLC has won numerous honors, including being named among the Best Employers in Ohio four years in a row by Best Companies Group and the Ohio Society for Human Resource Management State Council, as well as one of the Best Places to Work in IT by *Computerworld* for seven consecutive years.

Nance-Spayde says three primary skills are required to excel in human resources: the courage to lead and make decisions; expressing humility and being authentic; and the ability to switch between interpersonal relations and analytical problem solving.

Just as important, she says human resources must cultivate the belief that customer service exists at all levels of an organization.

"We are all serving someone in the process of doing our job, and that makes every person a customer," she says.

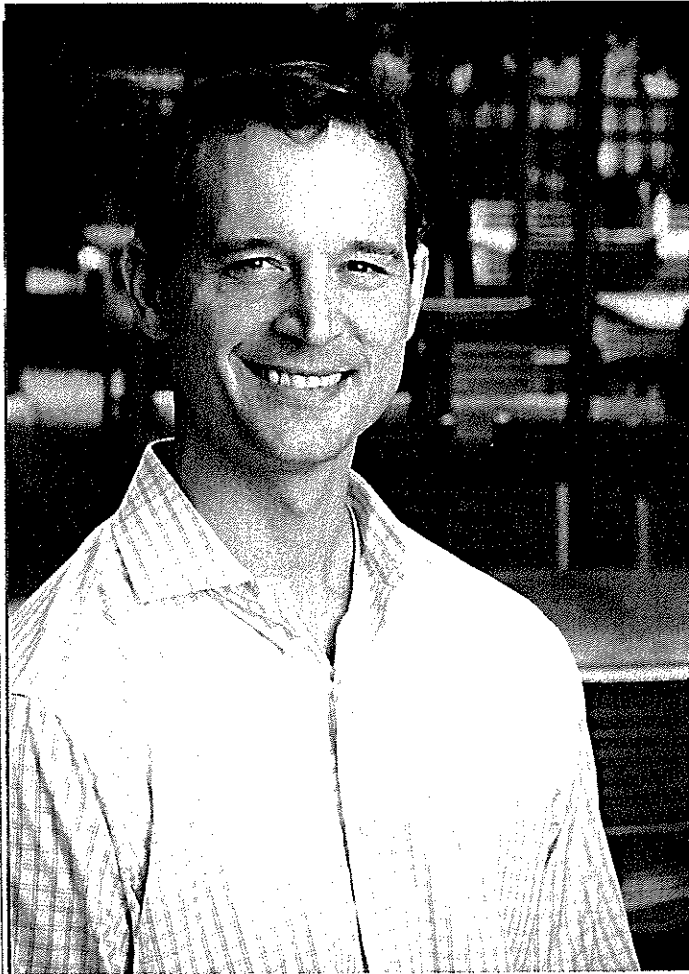
"I love working with people. But I am also very tactical and analytical."



**TAMMI  
NANCE-SPAYDE**  
Vice President, Corporate  
Human Resources  
**OCLC**

## EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

### SMALL ORGANIZATION



### DARREN MALHAME

Managing Partner  
NORTHSTAR CAFÉ  
and THIRD & HOLLYWOOD

DARREN MALHAME had just graduated from Duke Law School when his brother, Kevin, came to him with a business proposition.

Kevin and his wife, Katie, wanted to open a restaurant that would pull together exemplary customer service, high-quality food and a social conscience. They hoped Darren Malhame would help, but he wasn't convinced. "Being risk-averse," he says, "I decided we shouldn't all go bankrupt together."

Fast-forward a year later, and the restaurant called Northstar Café was thriving in Columbus's Short North. Malhame, on the other hand, was finding life at the law firm of Kaye Scholer in Washington, D.C. was not all that he hoped it would be. And so Malhame packed his bags and headed to Columbus to join Northstar as a managing partner.

"They had a fantastically attractive vision to make people happy and healthy and change the world doing it."

Although the Malhame brothers grew up outside New York City, Darren went to Amherst College in Massachusetts, while his younger brother, Kevin, headed west to Washington University in St. Louis. There, Kevin met his wife, Katie, a Greenville, Ohio, native. Their mutual desire to open a restaurant led them to the Northstar concept.

Meanwhile, Darren was trying his post-graduate hand at teaching with the faith-based Inner City Teaching Corps in Chicago. "I didn't have an inherent passion

for teaching," he says. "It was the greatest growth experience of my life [but] it was not as intellectually challenging as I wanted it to be, so I went to law, which was plenty of intellectual challenge, but not quite enough optimism and positive energy."

So he went to law school, but found working at a corporate firm unfulfilling. "Why I didn't want to be a lawyer is I was not passionate, and I knew I would never be as good as the people I worked for. It was better to be happy at the end

of the day, and if I were to die that night that I'd be OK with what I'm doing. I want to have an impact on the world and have fun doing it."

That is exactly what Malhame says he has found at Northstar, where the intent is to create a business that serves local, natural food and treats its customers and its employees as if they were family.

"Darren cares about everybody as an individual," says co-worker and nominator Leigh Nordin. "His legal background has brought a lot to our organization, but underneath is this undercurrent of really being interpersonal and kind and sensitive. He takes an active interest in everybody at Northstar—their lives, families, goals and aspirations, inside Northstar and outside Northstar."

The Northstar concept quickly gained traction in Columbus. The Shorth North restaurant opened in 2004, followed by locations in Clintonville in 2007 and at Easton in 2010. Third & Hollywood, a more sophisticated eatery with table service, opened in Grandview Heights in 2009.

## BEST PRACTICES

WITH MORE THAN 33,000 employees in nine countries that serve more than 40,000 locations daily, generating revenue in excess of \$100 billion, Cardinal Health is clearly a leader in the health-care industry.

But when the Fortune 21 company launched an endeavor to make sure each of its employees stood out as a leader in his or her own right, Cardinal Health stepped out as a true trailblazer.

Leadership Essentials, spearheaded by Lisa George, vice president of global talent management, and Jamillah Green-Davis, the former director of talent management, was intended as a “refreshing” of leadership competencies to identify behaviors to make each worker exemplary.

“We are a service business, so we create value through the results delivered by our people,” wrote Carole Watkins, chief human resources officer at Cardinal Health, in her nomination letter. “When our employees behave consistently according to Leadership Essentials, we deliver value for both our internal and external stakeholders.”

That value includes:

- Self-aware, highly engaged employees who take ownership over their own work and help others do the same
- Highly effective managers who trust and encourage their employees
- High-performing teams that collaborate to make the whole stronger than the individual

“We build great careers at Cardinal Health by encouraging collaborators and partners at all levels of the organization,” Watkins says.

Leadership Essentials strives to empower every employee to be a

leader, and to perpetuate the company philosophy of “leaders, developing leaders, developing leaders,” George says.

The ideas are broken into subsets for each level of employment or management within Cardinal Health: professionals and business support; managers of people, processes or projects; operations and manufacturing; directors and vice presidents.

The guiding principles include concepts such as maintaining a customer-centric focus with deep expertise, building strong relationships that foster teamwork and develop others, as well

as numerous guidelines related to thinking and acting strategically, attracting and retaining talent, and getting into the trenches to do the work that needs to be done.

Following such guidelines helps every employee feel like an equal part of the advancement of the company, no matter what area they serve, says George, who previously worked for Godiva Chocolatier, Campbell Soup Company and The Limited.

“When you have leaders, developing leaders, developing leaders, it permeates the fiber of your culture,” George says. “How you do business is a critical element to make sure people feel valued, letting them grow their careers and skills, and getting recognized for doing the best work possible.

“That doesn’t just mean getting promoted. That is something a lot of people aspire to, and we have lots of opportunities. We also spend a lot of time just making them feel valued and recognized in the role that they are in, to keep their skills fresh, and feel excited and challenged.”

**Leadership Essentials strives to empower every employee to be a leader.**



## CARDINAL HEALTH



*Lisa George*



## NATALIE CREDE

*Vice President,  
Talent Management*  
**SAFELITE AUTOGLASS**

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## CUTTING EDGE

NATALIE CREDE was happily serving the human resources needs at the Victoria's Secret division of Limited Brands when she received an intriguing call from an old boss.

Steve Miggo, who had left Victoria's Secret six months earlier, told Crede of an opportunity at his new company, Safelite AutoGlass, that seemed ideal for her.

Crede's response: "You want me to leave Victoria's Secret for auto glass?"

But Crede was intrigued enough to visit with the Safelite executive team, and she soon knew she had found a "tremendous opportunity."

"Safelite has years in the business, but from a human resources standpoint, it was almost like a startup," she says. "They were embarking on what sounded like a cultural transformation, and human resources were going to play a strategic role."

"I love to build and develop, and I could not think of a better opportunity. I saw hunger and receptivity and support within the executive team when I came to visit, and I fell in love. I would have been a fool to walk away from them."

In the past three years, Crede has worked to expand the human resources offerings and opportunities for all employees.

"She has an incredible work ethic and drive to get things done," says Miggo, Safelite's senior vice president of operations and human resources. "She is a tireless worker, and the quality of what she did was really good, and her stuff always felt very practical."

"Natalie always keeps the business and the business goals in mind, and makes sure it's something practical people can walk away from

and use. ... She makes it work in terms of results."

Crede, a Chicago native, learned practicality while studying human relations at St. Petersburg College in Florida, where she took a job as a personnel clerk for a small company selling products over the radio. That business, the Home Shopping Network, quickly exploded, and Crede spent the next decade keeping up with its expanding needs.

Ten years later, Limited Brands came calling. After convincing her Floridian husband and two sons to move north, Crede returned to her Midwestern roots to create talent management programs for Lane Bryant (then owned by Limited Brands) and Victoria's Secret.

As much as she taught others, however, Crede also learned—especially from Miggo, whom she calls "the traditional HR leader."

"He had more of an operational focus," she says. "He had owned his own business, and he approached human resources the way it should be—a lever to pull to enable your overall business strategy."

Crede adopted that same philosophy when she joined Safelite, expanding the company's e-learning opportunities and helping establish Destination 2012, a strategy that outlined six core competencies Safelite expects from its staff.

"I'm a big believer that any talent management program, in order for it to be effective, must be grounded in the mission and strategic imperatives of the company," Crede says. "Recruitment, learning, development and rewards are all connected to one another. Together they create a more people-focused culture that delivers sustainable results."

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## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

GRETCHEN GREEN dreamed of being a writer of the great American novel when she graduated from Ohio State University in 1972.

Instead, she became one of the most respected human resources professionals working for the state of Ohio, although she has lost none of her passion for life or literature.

Green is in her 40th year of service to the Buckeye State, having served in eight different departments before ending up at the secretary of state's office, where she has served under both Democrat Jennifer Brunner and Republican Jon Husted.

"Anyone who knows her knows she is amazing," says nominator Keith Speers, who worked with Green at the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). "I have never seen anyone who could balance so many roles—working with the unions, treating people fairly, supporting leadership and making sound decisions.

"It's amazing all the ways she has impacted state government, our own city and the companies she has worked for. She has had a pretty profound impact on state government and the human resource policies that have rolled out for over 30 years."

Green, a self-proclaimed "military brat," is no stranger to change. Her father served 20 years in the U.S. Army before retiring to Upper Arlington when Green was 13. "My father was from Michigan and mother was from Kentucky," she says. "This was right in the middle."

After graduating from Upper Arlington High School, Green went to OSU to major in English literature and become "a hippie." She wryly admits a curfew violation even got her arrested during the 1970 campus riots.

Instead of pursuing her literary goals, she accepted an internship at the Ohio Department of Administrative Services. Upon her 1972 graduation, a job offer followed.

In 1976, Green moved to the ODE as assistant personnel director before joining the Industrial Commission of Ohio in 1980 as personnel chief in the newly formed rehabilitation division. In 1986, she became the commission's head of labor and employee relations.

After a move to the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation as labor relations manager and acting director of human resources, Green held similar posts at the Ohio Department of Human Services, Columbus Area Mental Health Center, the Franklin County Engineer's Office and back to ODE, before joining Brunner's staff in 2007. By 2009, she was promoted to chief of staff and stayed on through the transition to Husted, returning to her HR roots.

"I know things are going well in HR when I don't hear about what's going on in HR," Husted says. "Gretchen creates the welcome silence that allows us to focus on our core mission. Gretchen has earned my respect and this award."

Green calls her job her "passion," but admits her husband of eight years, Stan Kronenberger, would love it if she retired so they could spend more time volunteering as historical 1860s re-enactors at the Statehouse, traveling and enjoying music and Green's love of theater. "I did summer stock for four years," she says. "I regret not going into it full time, but I wanted to eat."

"It doesn't feel like it's been 40 years," Green says. "That's why I keep doing it. I don't feel old enough to retire."



**GRETCHEN GREEN**

*Director of Human Resources  
OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE*

"It doesn't feel like it's been 40 years."



## THE RENAISSANCE COLUMBUS DOWNTOWN HOTEL



Geri Lombard

## GOOD WORKS

### ORGANIZATION

A LOT OF SUPERVISORS may go the extra yard, or even the extra mile, for their employees.

Geri Lombard has gone over the edge—literally.

The general manager of the Renaissance Downtown Columbus Hotel actually rappelled down the side of her own building as part of a Special Olympics fundraising drive. It was just one of many ways the Renaissance has become a leader in the Columbus service industry.

"We nominated [the Renaissance] because of [Geri's] phenomenal leadership and engagement," says Karen Morrison, president of the OhioHealth Foundation and senior vice president of OhioHealth, who works with the hotel through Taste of Columbus and Experience Columbus. "I've gotten to really value and appreciate her leadership with what she does every day with the Renaissance, helping to position Columbus as a

destination. The hospitality industry is a huge component of that."

The hotel's influence reflects its companywide goals to put people first, pursue excellence, embrace change, act with integrity and serve the world. To that end, the Renaissance Columbus has devoted itself to causes that touch residents across the city, especially children in need.

Among its most prominent efforts has been the Nationwide Children's Hospital Torch Relay, which raised more than \$35,000, and support of the Children's Miracle network for pediatric hospitals across the country.

To help families seeking treatment in Central Ohio, Renaissance Columbus offers its "Sleep Well Get Well Program," created by the Mar-

riott Business Council to provide accommodations for families traveling from out of town while children are at the hospital.

The Renaissance Columbus also encourages employees to get involved by having each department adopt and lead a cause. Projects have included American Red Cross blood drives and raising money for Faith Mission (led by the banquets department), volunteering at the Mid-Ohio Foodbank (front office and accounting departments) and helping Special Olympics (engineering department and executive team).

One of the efforts of which Lombard is most proud is the twice-a-year farm-to-table events at Latitude 41 restaurant, where meals are paired with local beers to benefit a charity selected by the restaurant team.

March 2012, for example, featured a beer dinner with Hugh Sisson of Heavy Seas Brewery benefiting Waves of

Health, a group of surfing doctors that travels to Third World countries to provide health care for people in undeveloped areas.

"How neat is that to say you helped provide medical services for people in need but promoted your industry as well?" says Lombard.

Lombard also helps the community on her own time, through the VIP Telethon for Children's Hospital as well as selling Girl Scout cookies for her 10-year-old and raising money for the Parent Teacher Organization and sports boosters.

"To give back to your community is just the right thing to do," she says. "We have obligations as citizens to give back and help people in need, and try to make everyone's life better."

The Renaissance  
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## GOOD WORKS

### INDIVIDUAL

WHEN SAFELITE AUTOGLASS sought to stage an annual triathlon to raise money for the African support organization Afrika Tikkun, it was logical for Donna Gibson, the company's director of benefits, to serve on the committee.

Gibson, however, did more than organize the triathlon—she made her own race debut and recorded the fastest bicycle portion among the female contenders.

That experience literally proved life-changing for Gibson, who has since gone on to become a die-hard triathlete, competing every summer weekend and winning the women's division of Safelite's event two years ago.

"Donna has gone through a healthy lifestyle change in her own personal life, and she transferred that to others to inspire them to do the same," says

Steve Miggo, Safelite's senior vice president of operations and human resources. "She always has the best in mind for our associates. She always is trying to push the envelope to get the company to stretch and do things for the benefit of our overall employee population."

Indeed, Gibson's athletic success proves more than just her fitness—it also shows she embodies Safelite's "people first" philosophy, as she strives to bring health and well-being to all the company's employees. "We are focused on exercise and living well, and supporting each other," Gibson says.

Gibson, a 19-year human resources veteran who has a bachelor's from Mount Vernon Nazarene University and an MBA from Franklin University, started her HR career at JK Evans & Associates before moving to the Longaberger Company and the Licking County

Board of MR/DD.

She came to Safelite to serve in a compensation role because she believed in the company's focus on inspiring its 10,000 workers to be their best. The biggest challenge was that the HR division was too antiquated to live up to that pledge—with limited, high-priced benefits plans and poor third-party customer service.

Her first moves: change the vendor, add three more plans to the benefits lineup and improve customer service by bringing services in-house. "When someone deals with benefits, they are already in a bad situation," Gibson says. "They don't need to get incorrect or bad information, or be treated like a number."

"I wanted the ability to move a business forward from a completely different perspective. To meet our company objective, we need to do the basics well first. We need to be in a position to make sure we have the right talent in the right place at the right time."

Safelite has launched a plethora of health and lifestyle initiatives, including the Safelite Challenge—of which the triathlon is part—to be healthy while raising money for Afrika Tikkun. The company also offers access to organic, locally grown food through a community supported agriculture partnership and quarterly health initiatives to help employees lose weight, get fit, quit smoking and eat better.

"Being at Safelite really did change my life," Gibson says. "It's a great place to work. I love the people. I love the philosophy and culture. 'People First' is our business philosophy, and I really believe in people being healthier."

"We are focused on exercise and living well, and supporting each other."



### DONNA GIBSON

Director of Benefits, HRIS,  
Shared Services  
SAFELITE AUTOGLASS



**EILEEN THOMAS**

*HR Specialist*  
**PORTFOLIO CREATIVE**

**FUTURE LEADERS**

AFTER STOPS at a few different colleges, Eileen Thomas found herself studying psychology at Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla., and then switching to humanities. But a meeting with a career counselor completely changed her path.

"She told me I should think about human resources," says Thomas, 24. "There is a very detail-oriented, organizational part to my personality. I knew I wanted to help people in some way. And I started to see how human resources could do that. There is labor law and certain rules you have to follow and be detail-oriented, which fits me. But you also get to interact with people—helping them find work or coaching through their current job. It is genuinely connecting with them."

That advice, combined with Thomas's move to Columbus to study at Franklin University, landed her at Portfolio Creative, a staffing and recruiting firm that

has been ranked three years in a row on the *Inc.* 500. There, she proved herself a future leader through her innovations and commitment to the people she serves.

"Eileen takes the initiative to research the best possible benefits for our internal team as well as our placed talent," says marketing manager Jennifer Brown, who nominated Thomas. "She's truly committed to improving our work environment, from keeping up-to-date with employment law to providing health-conscious wellness tips. Eileen genuinely cares for each and every employee."

That commitment to research is part of what landed Thomas at Portfolio Creative, where she started as an intern to confirm her newly chosen career path was the right one.

"It seemed like a good fit," she says. "I was working with benefits. I was helping people. I had the opportunity to do projects. It interested me."

After her year-long internship, Thomas graduated from Franklin with her degree in human resource management in January 2010 and joined Volunteers of America. When an HR position at Portfolio Creative came open in November 2010, Thomas jumped at the chance.

Among her initiatives is the Illumination Bureau, a new training program that brings in speakers and other learning opportunities. She is also creating an alumni project to keep in touch with former staffers.

Thomas is also in charge of the newly formed wellness committee, which strives to make employees start a healthy lifestyle through activities such as a team weight-loss competition, "Meatless Monday" and "Fruitful Fridays" to learn to eat better, and a new

Wii Fit station in the company lounge.

"It's all about work-life balance," Thomas says. "We need to make work a place to focus on health and wellness, since we are here eight or nine hours a day. We want our employees to be aware of what they can be doing."

"One of the most important things for me is making the experience for the employees the best it can be," she says. "What benefits can I bring to the table? What can we add to make the experience better? I am always researching the next thing. I am always seeking a new thing."

"Employee engagement and satisfaction are huge. If we don't have happy employees, we won't be productive."

*"If we don't have happy employees, we won't be productive."*