

Midlands Business Journal

Founded 1975

MARCH 29, 2019

THE WEEKLY BUSINESS PAPER OF GREATER OMAHA, LINCOLN AND COUNCIL BLUFFS

VOL. 45 NO. 13

C&A Industries invests in employee recruitment

by Richard D. Brown

What began in the spring of 1969 in the basement of Larry Courtmage's Papillion residence with a folding table, Rolodex, a phone hookup and an idea to start a professional recruiting firm aimed at technical positions, has evolved over 50 years into C&A Industries — a family-owned group of multi-faceted companies — which serve a variety of fields and industries, with customers in all 50 states.

C&A Industries, with just over 700 employees, operates out of its five-story, 80,000-square-foot national headquarters building at 13609 California St. and plans to grow its Aureus Medical Group affiliate into the burgeoning industry of staffing skilled post-acute care positions.

Courtmage, chairman/owner, and President/CEO Scot Thompson — who is in his 18th year with C&A Industries — explained that while Aureus Medical Group had identified the skilled post-acute niche as early as five years ago, they pursued the staffing work with caution and only in the past 18 months has the firm sought and trained the necessary personnel to grow the service.

"We specialize in niches of employment, train people for these niches and we've never wanted to be the jack of all trades," Courtmage said.

Thompson, who told Midlands Business Journal in an interview five years ago that Aureus Medical Group — the largest of C&A Industries' affiliates — retains the belief that as baby boomers are getting older and living longer, more medical attention is going to be required.

Aureus Medical Group was ranked as the seventh largest health care staffing firm in the nation last year by Staffing Industry Analysts. In addition, Aureus Radiology, LLC and Aureus Nursing, LLC were among the first national staffing firms to receive Gold Seal Approval Status in 2005 from The Joint Commission, an entity that accredits more than 15,000 health care organizations and programs in the U.S.

Thompson said C&A Industries intends to expand its workforce by 50 this year, consistent with the nearly 150 new positions created over the past three years.

Thompson, who was employed by Valmont for 12 years before coming to C&A Industries, holds an undergraduate degree in finance from the University of Nebraska at Omaha as well as an MBA.

He said C&A Industries transacts more



From left, President and CEO Scot Thompson, co-owner and Vice Chair Kathy Wolf-Courtmage and co-owner and Chairman Larry Courtmage ... Emphasizing staffing niches as a means for growth in the firm's 50th anniversary year.

than 10,000 placements annually and that the 50-year total is in the "hundreds of thousands."

C&A Industries reached about \$250 million in annual revenues in 2014 and since then has grown at a rate of 10 to 15 percent annually to be ranked in 2018 as the nation's 27th largest staffing firm by Staffing Industry Analysts as well as the 84th largest globally.

In addition to Aureus Medical Group, other C&A Industries' affiliates include: Aureus Group — a provider of customized staffing solutions specializing in the fields of finance and accounting, information and technology systems, health care leadership and executive-level searches; Celebrity Staff — a staffing solutions provider specializing in the administrative, management and legal fields; AurStaff — staffing solutions targeting industrial, skilled trades, technical, architectural and engineering fields; FocusOne Solutions — provider of managed services solutions and software; AurTravel — a full service boutique-style travel agency; and AurHomes — a provider of corporate housing.

Both Courtmage and Thompson cite C&A Industries' growing stable of employees as being the most important factor in the firm's 50th anniversary story.

Earlier this year Training Magazine, an industry journal, ranked Aureus University's efforts as among the Top 125 worldwide for effectiveness.

Thompson said there's a close correlation between the hefty investment in training and a high level of employee engagement. For example, the 2019 Best Places to Work in Omaha survey indicated that roughly 95 percent of C&A employees were characterized as "engaged" and/or "contributing."

"With our training and development programs we do two things: we keep the client happy and we keep the employee happy," Thompson said. "Everybody wins."

Larry Courtmage also stressed the heavy investment that is almost routinely made in technology.

"We've followed the needs of the business sector in staying atop of the technology curve," he said.

In particular, Thompson said a significant investment in the past two years has been made in artificial intelligence.

"So far it has been used to streamline and automate some of our repetitive processes," he said. "As a result, it has allowed us to more effectively and timely respond to our clients' and employees' needs and what is even more exciting is AI's application for future planned projects and leveraging its machine learning capabilities to tackle some broader and more complex challenges."

Technology investment has also targeted customer relationship management and a web portal for employees, among others.

Kathy Courtmage said the establishment of a wellness program has also been important to the success of C&A Industries. Her husband attended a WELLCOM presentation nearly 20 years ago in Lincoln; since then a committee of 20 to 25 plans and manages the C&A Industries employee wellness initiative.

She is also a board member of the Kim Foundation, a nonprofit family-funded charity promoting and advocating for issues surrounding mental health and suicide prevention.

Additional family members involved in C&A Industries include Craig Wolf, vice president/general manager of Aureus Medical Group, Mark Wolf, director of sales training and performance improvement, and Vicki Witkovski, corporate strategist/information systems.

C&A Industries is planning a 50th anniversary celebration for Saturday, April 27, in the Capitol District. Entertainment will be provided by Jacob Martin, a Nashville-based singer/songwriter.

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