

Joe Pluscht, numbers guy with an open door



Written By Aaron Nathans, *The News Journal – Top Workplaces*
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He says a company can get better by listening to what people have to say

The principles that guide Patterson-Schwartz Real Estate were put on paper more than 50 years ago, but Joe Pluscht said he tries to live them every day.

Pluscht took over for longtime president Richard Christopher in 2012, and said he wanted to take those principles into the future: "Knowing what you stand for,

having your actions match your words."

They also include being trustworthy, having an open line of communication, and being transparent, he said.

"That's important to me, that's what been important to the company," he said.

Those traits and others earned Pluscht the Top leader award for large companies in the 2014 Top Workplaces survey.

Pluscht, who grew up in the Liftwood neighborhood north of Wilmington, has lived almost his whole life in Delaware. He is a certified public accountant by trade, having graduated from the University of Delaware with a bachelor's degree in accounting.

He worked for a large CPA firm, and Patterson-Schwartz was a client, he said. He became intrigued by real estate, and got to see the culture of the company up close, he said.

His first job there was as accounting manager, starting in 1986. After 10 years in the financial arena of the company, he became sales manager of the company's Hockessin sales center in 1997. In 2006, he became general manager of the company, and he held that title until 2012, when he took over for Christopher.

Employees and agents describe Pluscht as a man who keeps his door open, saying hello in the hallways, and taking part in nearly all of the activities on the company's schedule.

Marcus DuPhily, assistant manager in the Greenville office, said Pluscht "totally leads by example. He's in the first one in the parking lot, and the last one to leave." He's approachable, and knows the name of each of the company's hundreds of agents, DuPhily said.

Pluscht is "laid back, he's a numbers guy," said Shana Delcollo, an agent and assistant manager in the Hockessin office. "He's super-compassionate about his employees, and about the consumer." The company, she said, is his family.

Pluscht said he's had the good fortune of surrounding himself with good people.

"You need to be a really good listener," embracing good ideas and hearing out concerns, he said. A company, he said, can get better by listening to what people have to say.