



Expertise key at Patterson-Schwartz

Written By Xerxes Wilson, *The News Journal – Top Workplaces August 31, 2015*

Employees say the strength of Patterson-Schwartz Real Estate is having the expertise of the largest realty businesses in the area combined with a longstanding name that resonates with locals.

It's these factors that led the company to a first-place ranking among large businesses in the 2015 Top Workplaces survey, conducted by The News Journal Media Group with WorkplaceDynamics of Exton, Pennsylvania.

Employees praised the team atmosphere, wealth of resources for everyday tasks, and the ability to enrich their skill sets.

"Anywhere in Delaware, however you define it, we are the leading broker," said Sal Sedita, who manages 85 brokers from his Hockessin office and has been with the company for more than 20 years. "Bigger isn't always better but it doesn't hurt to have a number one presence. Tied to that, because we live here and work here and the market is everything to us, we are active in the community."

Since its inception in 2001, the Patterson-Schwartz Foundation has donated more than \$1,000,000 to local organizations.

Real estate agents for the company say being a part of the community helps with the job and also fosters collaboration among workers.

"You quickly learn there is enough business for everyone to live comfortably," said Max Rodriguez, who has been a real estate agent for the company for two years. "We are independent contractors, but there is a bigger picture and bigger brand. The better we all do, the easier our job becomes."

The company has nine offices across the state. Its newest outpost opened in Bethany Beach this summer. Agents for the company said having such a large footprint helps because they have an office close to whatever deal they are trying to clinch.

"I am comfortable working out of many offices. It helps because you can bring your clients to an office nearby," said Linda Hanna, who has been a real estate agent for Patterson-Schwartz for 10 years.

The prominence of online listing websites like Realtor.com and Zillow have changed the business to make the task of an agent less about providing data and more about interpreting data, Sedita said. Agents for Patterson-Schwartz said their in-house system is more detailed and more frequently updated, giving them an edge in providing the best information to their clients.

"It takes a lot more to sell a house than just putting up a sign. It comes down to the training and the atmosphere. Many firms don't have the support staff we have and are doing administration work on top of being Realtors," Rodriguez said. "The hardest part is gaining people's trust. You gain that trust with knowledge and information."

The company also provides its workers with a steady source of information either online or through guest seminars to enrich their skill sets as realtors, employees said. This helps them keep up to date on items like flood insurance changes the effect a property's value, or how to approach a difficult situation.

"It is a very hard conversation when (the value of someone's home) isn't what they expect. Patterson-Schwartz offers classes and prepare you for that," said Rhonda Smith, a real estate agent for Patterson based in Middletown. "It is always a tough conversation ... but the training makes it easier."