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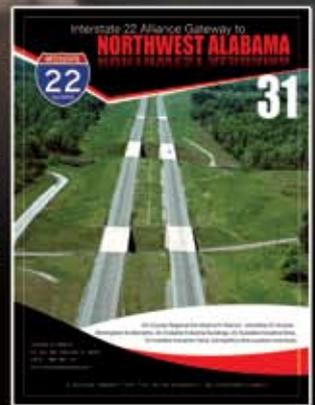


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THE SIMPLICITY OF TH

Total Office Solutions, LLP; Synergy



Linda Monette is visibly proud of her companies and their success. What entrepreneur wouldn't be proud of six tenured companies that independently and collectively solve some of the most difficult corporate relocation challenges for its clients? Each of her companies is branded with a strong market presence, each filled with successful teams and satisfied, repeat clients.

After twenty three years as a successful businesswoman, some people get so caught up in the pace and complexities of "now" that they forget their beginnings. If you spend ten minutes with Linda Monette, you know right away that is just not the case with her. She quickly points out that her business, Total Office Solutions, LLP (TOS), www.tospartners.com, started, has grown, and has retained the same core values that it had



when she and her partner Michael, started it.

They have worked diligently to keep those values woven throughout their corporate culture. She fondly refers to their business as a culture of "Servant's Heart". You hear people talk about a "Servant's Heart" throughout Total Office Solutions, LLP, each time touching their heart with their hand. It is as genuine as it is impressive.

When asked about the beginnings of Total Office Solutions, LLP, Linda smiles as she remembers back to when she and her husband Michael met on September 5, 1986. Michael, at that time working for Bell Atlantic, was waiting in the reception area with the plan to sell Linda's employer computer maintenance services. Linda supervised the intelligent terminal service needs of a three hundred employee programming company and had been asked to escort Michael upstairs to a sales meeting with her and her manager. Two business meetings and one date later, a first date that included Linda's seven year old daughter Amy, she and Michael met for lunch, talked about their first date, work, and agreed to the idea that would start Move Solutions, Inc.. Nine months later, already experienced at working endless hours together, Linda and Michael married. Move Solutions, Inc. later became the first operating company for Total Office Solutions, LLP.

During that fateful lunch, sharing a desire to work for themselves, Linda and Michael efficiently used the restaurant's napkin

THEIR COMPLEXITY

Equates to Synemosity

By: Jonanna Widner



to sketch out a PC disconnect, move and reconnect service company. PCs were just starting to show up in the corporate world in volume, were still considered to be the “magic box” and were getting lots of special attention during corporate moves. Both of their employers were experiencing more and more need for technical PC move services, yet finding few people willing to take the risk to touch the equipment. Linda and Michael felt that they had a solution to those needs and the complementing skill sets to make that solution work. Linda recalls thinking “between the two of us, we were a whole business person”! Starting June 18, 1987 and continuing now, serving as TOS’s majority owner and senior principal, Linda manages the company infrastructure while Michael leads the sales and marketing efforts. While they clearly make a great team and understand their respective roles, Linda does love to point out that she set their first sales appointment with her employer the same day that they sketched the idea on the napkin, putting in place the cornerstone of leading with sales. One of the Monette’s favorite sayings, heard several times during the interview, is “You have to have business to be in business!”

While Linda loves to talk about the beginnings of TOS, she absolutely lights up when talking about their business world of today. She works within and manages Total Office Solutions, LLP (TOS). TOS is a management company, created to own and brand its five underlying Corporate Relocation product and service

companies. Between them, the TOS companies provide many of the services and office furniture products that a commercial tenant needs in support of their own business objectives. TOS has been designed and developed to provide quality solutions to some of a tenant’s most frustrating lease renewal or corporate relocation tasks.

During that fateful lunch, sharing a desire to work for themselves, Linda and Michael efficiently used the restaurant’s napkin to sketch out a PC disconnect, move, and reconnect service company.

Everyone I met within the Total Office Solutions LLP companies, particularly the Monettes, are grounded in the needs of what they call “Small Business; Main Street, USA”. Their entire team is constantly focused on their world of extreme process. They understand and embrace that process control provides their teams the “gift of simplicity” in their world of multi-company complexity. The Monettes laugh when they remind people that the reality of their business concept is that if there are issues; their clients have “one throat to choke”. Both of them have a clear understanding that the throat referred to in that reality is named “Monette.”

Recognizing that today’s business world is one of constant change, the Monettes have created a culture of constant change to match it. Linda believes that successful businesses create visible and auditory environments of change. The Monettes create environments of change by using banners, internal publications, regular open meetings and designing their workspaces and furniture to support a contagion of work activity and sound. All of these tools provide the Monettes the ability to quickly change leadership messages and environments

to match the economy they see ahead. TOS is an environment of symbolism and metaphor, staffed by a team who is always working to create an environment of purpose. Most recently, starting in late 2007, Linda and Michael started having regular “TOS Abyss Meetings” with the entirety of the TOS employee force. The point of the meetings was to identify to their teams that there was a crushing recession looming in front of them. They laid out a plan to change the TOS cultures to raw, unrelenting business prospecting and quality service intensity. They challenged their teams to deliberately beat the economic “Abyss” ahead. If successful, their efforts would consume all of their time and talent, yet leave them with their futures. The metaphorical starting point of those meetings was the point that the “Abyss” does not contain natural light. Their futures would only be as bright as the light they created for themselves. In addition to good old hard work, the many changes that were put in place included additional sales hiring and development, subtle and clever changes in data collection and reporting and a very deliberate use of the corresponding management tools. All senior leadership schedules were reworked to focus management tasks to Monday mornings, leaving Monday afternoons and the rest of the week for the Business Unit Leaders to lead their sales teams.



The Monettes are very proud to point out that TOS has never sent an employee home without their job due to a layoff. As importantly, they have never reduced their employees' wages or benefits. Michael points out that “since we started our company we have survived and prospered through three “100 year recessions,” getting stronger and more capable through and because of each of them”. Both Monettes view that history as one of the two most important legacies of their companies. Their business confidence is based upon the knowledge that their teams are smart, tough, resilient and unbending in the face of the impossible. Those employees who meet the expectations of the firm can count on keeping their jobs.

Every TOS company is automated with a complete emphasis on an efficient user—friendly software interface, minimizing paper. All of their custom designed applications focus on decentralizing the user from having to be at an office. In Michael's case, he doesn't even have an office. He feels strongly that his job is to be in the “City”, not in the office. Linda points out that they hire and develop capable leadership throughout TOS.

While that means they have higher compensation models than some competitors, Linda feels that there is a small business maturity in recognizing that she and Michael are not the only people who are supposed to make money.

You cannot be a TOS employee without an understanding of the importance of smart application systems throughout the companies. You regularly hear terms like “BusApp,” “LeadTrak,” “Propose,” and “ECS” (Electronic Claims System) and “PCS” (Electronic Punch System). Aside from accounting and design software, TOS managers and in-house development programmers have created all of their internal software application programs. They are available to any TOS employee who has a usage need via intra-net, website, desktop PC or laptop. They stay current with technology and then use that technology to communicate, communicate and then communicate a bit more with each other, their suppliers and their clients. Knowing that technology is only the start of communication, they hold recurring classes on communicating completely, correctly and in a way that makes sense to the entire team. Both the Monettes and their senior leadership teams take great pride in their history of being innovators in their industry market segments.

The elegance to the concept of Total Office Solutions, LLP companies is “The Simplicity of Their Complexity”. The five different companies of TOS are designed to work both independently and in concert with each other. Corporate relocation is a demanding business environment, one that takes planning, process, and experienced personnel. Michael is a Vietnam veteran with six years in the Air Force. He proudly recalls the Air Force as his first real job, pointing out that TOS is a mirror of the United States Air Force's Tactical Air Command (TAC) structure. Much like the Combat Air Wing's of TAC, each tooled with different aircrafts designed to serve different missions, each TOS company is designed for a single core-centric purpose. Each is carefully designed and developed to provide a commercially viable service or product. Each TOS company's teams are trained and expert at providing that company's service or product, rather than risk the effort dilution of trying to be everything to everybody. Like Air Force Wing Commanders, each TOS Business Unit Leader is developed and capable at leading their own company or joining with other TOS companies to serve as a multi-company resource.

“You have to have business to be in business”!



With grins on their faces, TOS leaders go so far as to describe their teams as Economic Combat Warriors! (They are quick to remind you that nobody dies!)

In addition to the military like synergy of the companies working together, it is easy to see the same kind of organization and process development throughout TOS. If you see a TOS crew in the field moving a company, installing furniture or driving a truck, you first notice their professional uniforms and logo's equipment. Each uniform identifies that employee's purpose to TOS customers. The uniformity of their employees is one of the many efforts that bring an environment of security to their client base. It is important to their clients that they know at a glance that TOS employees are trained, capable and authorized to be in that customer's environment.



Aside from the simplicity of uniformed employees, the TOS "BrandPlan" is to present their prospects and clients with a consistent three layer system of branding. Layer one is the face of their Account Managers. It is the most important of the brand layers because they know that "People sell to and serve People". Layer two is the service/product capability of that account manager's TOS Company. The final layer is the brand and capability of TOS, the brand behind the brands, and its combined companies. While sounding a bit complex to the first time user, TOS has developed sales documents and

easily accessible digital platforms so that it takes just moments to "get" the Simplicity of their Complexity.

Adhering to their belief that "you have to have business to be in business," an essential part of their synergy concept is that all TOS employees are trained to watch and listen for additional service

and product opportunities. They capture those opportunities by educating their client's on the capabilities of ALL of the TOS companies, not just the TOS company the employee works for. For example, a commercial tenant that asks Corporate Source, Ltd. (The TOS Mid-to-high end contract furniture dealership) to propose on their office furniture needs, is doing so very early in the process due to contract furniture's need for longer lead times. While the Corporate Source, Ltd. account

manager is working with the prospect, they may be exposed to that prospect's need for office moving services, touch-up or repair of furniture that they intend to keep, transportation or storage services, etc., all of which are immediately available through other TOS companies. Move Solutions, Ltd. (One of the nation's largest office moving companies), Furniture Solutions, Ltd. (Mid-to-preowned office furniture dealership), New Again Solutions, Ltd. (Furniture touch up, repair, upholstery, painting, and facility repair), or TechTeam, LTD. (PC/Server disconnect/reconnect, voice and data cabling), are all busily serving their

JOPLIN missouri

Central. Connected. Capable.

Central: Joplin's strong central U.S. location is right in the heart of growing wind-energy markets

Connected: Efficient, cost-effective highway and rail transportation routes provide easy connections to major wind project areas

Capable: A large, hardworking labor force has the capabilities to meet the highest level of customer demands

The great labor force in the Joplin region is enhanced with two training facilities dedicated to renewable and alternative energy:

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client bases. All are immediately available for that Corporate Source, Ltd. account manager to refer to their client. Of course, those referrals can originate from any TOS company to any TOS company.

One of the strongest fibers of the TOS ethic is what they call their passion for loose footballs. Recognizing that even great people and great teams sometimes stub their toe in the ever changing demands of a corporate relocation, they train and expect their teams to run to an issue as fast as they run to an opportunity. They are a tough, disciplined group of people who have developed a culture that believes that “the only issue to avoid is issue avoidance itself.” For every internal system that provides service, there is a corresponding system to detect and keep reporting service failure, ensuring that client issues are attended to immediately and completely.

Recognizing the importance of earth’s resource sustainability, the Monettes and their teams constantly work to minimize wasteful business practices or products. They were the first firm to introduce plastic moving crates in the Southwest United

States; eliminating 20,000 cardboard moving boxes per MONTH that previously were going to the Dallas landfill. They diligently work to represent office furniture products to their clients that have minimized off —gassing, that are finished in environmentally friendly water based finishes, and have long, durable life cycles that lend themselves to repurposing. Their pre-owned furniture company, Furniture Solutions, Ltd., buys and repurposes approximately 5,000 tons of pre-owned office furniture per year, all of which might otherwise go to landfills. In addition, each sale of a piece of pre-owned furniture removes the need for the carbon footprint of that same piece being manufactured again as new furniture.

The absolute beauty of this TOS multi-synergy is how easily it provides dependable qualitative services and products to its clients and referral sources. Their system of all TOS companies working



“Our synergistic world of Total Office Solutions, LLP has worked so well that we have been forced to invent a word to describe it; Synemosity. Synemosity is the atmosphere of TOS’s successful synergy!”

alone or as a team pushes their service quality up because TOS employees who have been referred to a client by other TOS employees CANNOT AFFORD to disappoint their fellow TOS employee’s client. If they do, that referring TOS employee will not refer other business to them in the future!

“Every TOS company provides elements of service and support that slightly overlap and link to the services and products of other TOS companies,” Linda says in summary, “thus strengthening the whole, while creating an employee and client base that can count on us in good times and bad! Our synergistic world of Total Office Solutions, LLP has worked so well that we have been forced to invent a word to describe it; Synemosity. Synemosity is the atmosphere of TOS’s successful synergy!” In simple words, it is “the simplicity of our complexity”.

Total Office Solutions, LLP is a Dallas, Texas based national provider of Corporate Relocation tenant office moving, furniture installation and final clean services. Move Solutions, Ltd., their office moving company is one of the largest service providers in the country. They are a Select Kimball Office dealer, National Furniture dealer, AIS dealer, and one of the largest pre-owned office furniture buyer and seller entities in the industry. They are a founding member of OMAW; Office Movers Alliance Worldwide, an alliance of the leaders of the office moving and commercial furniture installation industry with members throughout the first tier cities of the United States, Europe and Asia. www.tospartners.com

