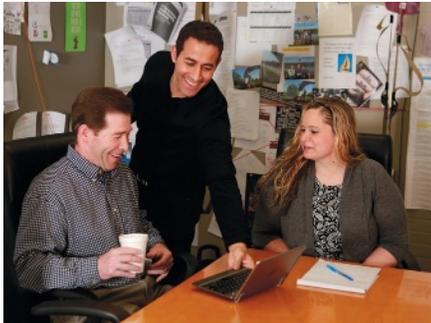


Collaborative Culture

Choice Recovery has an inclusive culture where everyone, from consultants to compliance officers, works together.

By Katy Zillmer



John Olmstead, Chad Silverstein and Alicia Wilson.

**COMPANY NAME:
CHOICE RECOVERY**

INCEPTION: 1997

**HEADQUARTERS:
COLUMBUS, OHIO**

**LEADERSHIP:
CHAD SILVERSTEIN, PRESIDENT**

EMPLOYEES: 60

Chad Silverstein started Choice Recovery while attending college at the Ohio State University in 1997. From the beginning, he had big ideas to build a self-managed culture to help consumers and clients in the credit and collection industry.

“I have always tried to build a company that I would be excited walking into every single day,” Silverstein said.

Today, Choice Recovery, headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, is going on 20 years in business operating with a culture that encourages collaboration and accountability. Company leaders helped create the core values that are used to hire, fire, recognize and reward in order to build their team with purpose. At the heart of their culture lies an ownership mindset that expects associates to think and act like a partner in the business.

“I’ve never had managers and supervisors in my culture,” Silverstein said. “Instead, we’ve embraced a peer-to-peer flat structure with strong leadership whose responsibility is to hold each other accountable.”

For example, one of the company’s employees is held accountable by the 35 consultants he works with—and vice versa.

“We look at it more as a coalition, not a pyramid hierarchy chart,” Silverstein said. “Everybody is on one team. It only works well when you have the right people. That’s been the challenging part. It only works when you’ve got the right team, and I’ve got that now.”

Each of the company’s 60 staff members has gone through an extensive interview process to determine if the candidate has the potential to lead, not just collect. Every

leadership position is held by someone who started off in an entry-level position.

The company also trains its collection consultants how to effectively listen to and speak with consumers. The result is a team with a long tenure at Choice Recovery and consumers who send in letters about how their experience with the company’s consultants has changed their perception of the collection industry.

Silverstein focuses a lot on explaining Choice Recovery’s culture to clients because he believes it is the reason for the company’s high performance and positive feedback.

“If you combine the culture with an engaged employee who has the skills and resources, the experience for the consumer is going to be amazing,” Silverstein said.

Choice Recovery even invites employees to participate in an Advisory Board Committee, where they can help make decisions on the company’s policies, procedures and processes.

Essentially, every employee has ownership in the company. Consultants receive their own portfolio of new business and receive a flat percentage of how much money they make the company with no ceiling—very similar to a franchise business model.

“It’s a peer-managed, self-managed organization where everyone is in charge of everything and everyone is responsible for everything,” Silverstein said. “Building a culture where employees love to come to work every day results in them being engaged and produces higher results.” ▣

Katy Zillmer is ACA International’s communications specialist.