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Finalists Announced for 2007 SWPP Workforce Management Professional of the Year Award

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE – February 2, 2007 – The Society of Workforce Planning Professionals (SWPP) today announced the five finalists for the 2007 Workforce Management Professional of the Year Award, which recognizes a workforce management professional who has shown outstanding leadership in the industry. The finalists are Aaron Becraft of Microsoft Corporation, Melissa Fernandez of Nevada Power Company, Brian Hemminger of Coca-Cola Enterprises, Kim Hoffman of American Home Shield, and Kim Newkirk of Bluegreen Corporation.

“These five individuals are so outstanding, and we are pleased to recognize them as finalists for this distinguished award,” said Vicki Herrell, SWPP Executive Director. “They have all demonstrated great leadership and ability in the field, as well as shown measurable results for their companies.”

Aaron Becraft was nominated for this award when he served as Lead/Senior Workforce Management Analyst at PacifiCorp, where he worked for six years. However, since the nomination, he has moved on to Microsoft Corporation to re-join the person who originally hired him into the workforce management field. But his boss at Pacificorp, who submitted his nomination, was still thrilled to learn that Aaron had been selected as a finalist. Mark Ellingson of PacifiCorp says, “Aaron exemplifies the best in workforce management professionals. He effectively used his knowledge and passion for workforce management along with his patient leadership skills to help lift the performance of PacifiCorp’s contact centers to levels only dreamed of a few years ago.” Here are just a few of Aaron’s accomplishments while he was at Pacificorp: 95% of the same day schedule changes are done in less than 10 minutes and after the fact adjustments are kept to a minimum; center

workload has increased each year, but because of his ability to manage multiple shifts that change based on call patterns, and multiple split skills (21), the staffing level has decreased 22% over the past 3 years; total shifts were reduced in one of PacifiCorp's contact centers from over 125 to 63; and his consistently accurate call load forecasting (80% of the 15-minute intervals within $\pm 15\%$) led to a total call volume accuracy with a variance of less than 1% on 3.3 million calls annually. Under Aaron's tutelage, Team Managers rotated through the Real Time Management function, gaining a solid understanding of call center metrics. After implementing Aaron's suggestion to give each contact center agent the opportunity to observe real time management for four hours, the contact centers realized a significant benefit as adherence rose from 81% to just over 91% in the past year. In addition to keeping on top of his job, Aaron is sought after as a resource for other workforce managers all around the world for his expertise in scheduling, forecasting, real time and associated reporting. Over the past few years he has mentored contact center work force managers in large companies through out the United States and other countries. In his new position at Microsoft, Aaron is now forecasting for 1400+ skills types that are outsourced to call centers around the world.

When Melissa Fernandez, Team Leader, Customer Contact, came on board with Nevada Power five years ago, two things were immediately clear: the company needed to get a better picture of contact center performance in order to meet the ongoing demands of its customer base and it needed to introduce automation to bring greater efficiencies to workforce management. Having spent years using the Aspect eWorkforce Management tool at two other companies, she knew that the solution would make sense for Nevada Power. She also knew she faced a double-edged challenge in getting the green light: Not only did Fernandez need to convince budget planners, whose primary concern is keeping costs down, to make the investment, she also needed to sell the solution to the company's union. First came the easy part. Because of her expertise and proven successes utilizing workforce technology, Fernandez was able to clearly demonstrate to budget planners the potential cost savings that accurate forecasting and scheduling would bring. Furthermore, because the entire workforce management process at Nevada Power had been manual until Fernandez came on board, she was also able to easily show the decrease in administrative costs that would be realized

through automation of routine tasks like creating schedules and managing time off requests. Getting the union on board proved more challenging. To dispel the “big brother” myths, Fernandez and her team organized Call Center 101 classes in an effort to educate agents on how new approaches and technologies would actually give them greater power in their jobs. Afterwards, the union agreed that the software would ensure that the agents were performing at high levels and would help good agents stay on the job. Since the system implementation, Fernandez and her team have achieved great results, and the contact center has demonstrated huge cost savings in sign-in and compliance percentages alone. “Melissa’s strong background and creativity in addressing workforce management is a real asset to Nevada Power,” says Shad Koon, Manager, Customer Contact. “Most importantly, Melissa’s willingness to try new ideas or reinvent existing methods has greatly contributed to the success of the workforce management department and the company.”

Brian Hemminger, Workforce Manager for Coca-Cola Enterprises Customer Development Centers, has more than eight years of call center experience, with six of those years dedicated to workforce management. Brian started his career in workforce management as a Real-Time Analyst with Bank One/Chase. Brian continued his success and expanded his knowledge when he accepted a Workforce Analyst position with Coca-Cola Enterprises. In his new position, he played a key role in the introduction and adoption of workforce management practices in a group that had minimal workforce management expertise. Brian utilized his previous experience to assist in the cultivation of an evolving inbound and outbound call center environment. He is known for his ability to quickly adapt and diagnose procedural break-downs and challenges that impede optimal performance. Since his arrival at Coca-Cola Enterprises, the workforce team has grown from two analysts to a team of seven that he has been managing since May of 2005. His shared philosophy of investing in and developing others has helped him to gain his team’s support through encouragement, participation, and group feedback. Through customized “Progression and Development” sessions, his team has learned to focus on overcoming obstacles by collaborating with other departments. By building rapport and engaging in other departmental meetings, Brian is successfully changing negative perceptions that were previously associated with workforce management. Brian has also led the charge in achieving the goals of the workforce

management team, including a YTD forecasted call volume within 0.16% of actual call volume and a YTD forecasted average handle time within .05% of actual average handle time. In addition, Brian is always looking for ways to increase internal department efficiencies and communications by implementing new processes, including: redesigning the daily forecast e-mail to provide the supervisors and managers a quick visual of events, areas of opportunity, and service level concerns; creating a blackout calendar which provides supervisors and support staff the right times to take employees off the phones and maintain service levels; and designing the quarterly forecast calendar which recaps the upcoming weeks call volume and service levels, as well as providing historical data to help identify trends and patterns related to abandon calls, adherence and shrinkage. According to Coca Cola's Nicole Thomas, "Brian has demonstrated how valuable it is to have the right person in the right job. The CDC wouldn't be where it is today without his direction and persistence to get the job done."

Kim Hoffman began her career with American Home Shield, a home warranty protection company, as a Customer Service Representative in the Iowa call center while a student at Iowa State University. After graduating with a degree in Mathematics, she was promoted to Staffing Analyst and a year later transferred to the new LaGrange, GA center to construct the workforce management department. Using IEX workforce management software, she built and maintained accurate inbound forecasting models to plan for staffing that would meet customer requirements. She was soon the primary liaison between all levels in management in both the sales and service delivery channels. She creates all of the staffing models that result in hiring plans and schedules. American Home Shield uses Six Sigma methodology, and Kim is frequently asked to provide information as she is known for having the "best numbers" and for accuracy of data. In July of 2006, Kim accepted the WFM Manager-Operations Analyst position in Memphis, TN. Results are the real indicator of performance and in that regard Kim's contributions this past year have been tremendous. Call volume has increased 2% over 2005, but through continued refinement of scheduling and having the right number of associates online at the right times, the speed of answer to customers improved during the two busiest months of the year. This was accomplished with an added benefit of a reduction of 50 FTEs. This resulted in an annual savings of \$1,435,200 in wages and

benefits. Kim also investigated areas outside the normal workforce management function and, in one instance, worked with the company's telecom department to identify calls that were "lost" and unaccounted for. The company, through its rapid growth, had purchased hundreds of 800 numbers that were turned on and off based on sales campaigns. All calls were not being accounted for, and through her perseverance, the volume was identified and tracked correctly. American Home Shield's Cheryl Engels notes that, "Impressive results were achieved due to Kim's continued attention to detail, creativity in communicating, and developing spreadsheets to tell a story to the operations teams about the importance of reviewing data for process improvements and how each associate's work performance impacts the bottom-line. Her continued enthusiasm and ability to put a positive spin on change has made a huge impact on the overall organization."

Kim Newkirk serves as Resource Planning Manager for Bluegreen Corporation's owner contact center in the Indianapolis area. Since joining Bluegreen in April 2003, Kim has been responsible for resource planning, budget management, and divisional profit and loss statements. Kim, a graduate of Indiana State University, supervises a staff of five professional employees in the contact center and has more than 10 years of experience in the workforce management arena. Bluegreen has experienced explosive growth within the past few years and Kim has played an instrumental role with this expansion across the Owner Relations division. She participates in the strategic planning of the division and establishes departmental goals to align with the company vision. In 2006, Kim was extremely successful in leading the workforce management efforts of the company and helped reduce annual payroll expenses with her division realizing a total payroll savings of over \$400,000. This savings was accomplished through three successful initiatives: determining the optimal use of Voluntary Time Off (VTO) saving the company \$215,265 in payroll costs and eliminating 17,360 hours during off-peak periods; leading a team that reviewed the efficiency of operating hours which allowed the center to close on Saturday with a savings of \$216,320 in payroll costs in just the first few months; and revising schedules to save \$10,245 in payroll costs and cover peak times more efficiently. She also successfully implemented schedule and vacation bidding within IEX, consistently met service goals (80% of calls answered within 45 seconds) within a multi-skilled environment with an annual call volume of 1.3

million calls, achieved a forecasting accuracy rate in 2006 of 2.1%, and expanded the use of the workforce management tool to four other departments within the company. According to Angela Blevins, Vice President of Contact Center Operations for Bluegreen, “I have had the pleasure of working with Kim Newkirk for over three years. I consider Kim to be my strategic partner within the Owner Relations division. During this time, I have watched Kim grow from simply providing key reporting and data collection support for 50 agents to managing a Workforce team responsible for staffing plans, payroll administration, and forecasting call and email volume for 200 agents and 3 regions.”

The SWPP Board of Advisors selected the five finalists from nominations submitted on the SWPP website. The Workforce Management Professional of the Year award will be chosen from the five finalists by the Board of Advisors and announced at the 2007 SWPP Annual Conference, which will be held February 21-23, 2007 at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, TN.

About SWPP

The Society of Workforce Planning Professionals (SWPP) is an organization devoted to facilitating education and networking opportunities among workforce planners across all industries. Membership in SWPP is available to all workforce planning professionals and other interested parties from consulting and vendor organizations. Both individual memberships and corporate membership options are available, with full benefits and costs outlined on the organization’s website at www.swpp.org.

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