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Drexel Fitzwater Named 2009 Workforce Management Professional of the Year

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE – April 10, 2009 – The Society of Workforce Planning Professionals (SWPP) today announced Drexel Fitzwater of Vangent, Inc. as the winner of the 2009 Workforce Management Professional of the Year Award, which recognizes a workforce management professional who has shown outstanding leadership in the industry.

“Every year, we are amazed by the quality of nominees for this award,” said Vicki Herrell, Executive Director of SWPP. “We are so thrilled to recognize Drexel as this year’s winner. Through his leadership and vision in the workforce management arena, he was able to achieve great results for his company and their customers.”

The other finalists for the award were Richard Brooks of Bright House Networks, Ferenc Cstalos of Nationwide Insurance, Donna Edwards of Sears Holding Corporation, and Matt Langford of Experian Consumer Direct.

According to Joanna Sampson, Deputy Director of Client Relations at Vangent, “Drexel (Drex) combines direct workforce management experience with a strong sense of strategic and tactical direction to achieve results. He has a keen analytical ability and attention to detail, but is able to create and execute a vision for his organization. He acts as an agent of change, combining his people skills with a strong sense of purpose.

“Drex is a natural leader, and is able to effectively communicate a strategic vision to senior executives and CSRs, and garner their support,” she noted. “He has used his leadership and team-building skills to build a culture of development, consistency, accountability and continuous improvement in his organization. Drex combines a strong project management

orientation with a sense of fun to build a team that is well-positioned to effectively support our organization over the long-term.”

Drexel Fitzwater joined the Vangent team in November 2007 as Program Manager for Workforce Management. Drexel brought eight years of contact center experience and six years' direct experience in workforce management, all in large scale contact centers, to his role. The Vangent organization at that time had a workforce management program that had not kept pace with the rapid growth the program had experienced. The center successfully met the metrics of their contract with their client, but few initiatives were in place to improve staffing, manage queues in real time, or properly notify key team members of unexpected deviations in performance. The contact centers were using Aspect eWorkforce Management; however, the system was a shared system and had not been fine-tuned to account for the 3,000–4,000 customer service representatives employed on this program.

Understanding that improving efficiency in the contact center meant improving the technology and understanding of workforce management, Drex began to overhaul both the technology and the fundamental understanding of how it can be used by the entire organization. In reviewing the program needs, he set an ambitious course to roll out several modules of the Aspect suite within the first few months of 2008 and align his organization for success.

Because there was no central tracking mechanism to allow a consolidated view of requests, approved employee time off was difficult to manage. Baseline data gathered before implementation showed that some centers were occasionally experiencing over 20% absenteeism on single days. To address this problem, Drex began implementation of the Aspect Empower module. During the roll out, he and his team focused on teaching Operational staff how to utilize this tool and how the processes would be managed and maintained. The roll out effectively changed not only the way staff was accounted for and time off or exceptions were granted, but allowed staff to feel part of the entire center, not just their group. Drex understood that in rolling out a program like this, he was not only introducing a new technology, he was changing the culture of an organization. Drex and his

team created training materials that emphasized the transparency of the process, and the benefits to Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) and managers. Since this roll-out, Vangent has reduced and maintained the absenteeism to about 12% on average, which has helped the company meet financial goals and service levels consistently.

At the same time, Drex began to review staff schedule adherence metrics to determine how they could align with industry best practice. During the first measurement period, he found that schedule adherence for the entire enterprise was around 45%. The CSRs were not following their schedules and supervisors and management had little way of tracking where their employees were and what they were doing. He then worked with the technology staff to install and configure the Aspect Real-Time Adherence module. As they rolled out this functionality, Drex oversaw a comprehensive training program that was rolled out to all management. It provided immeasurable insight into the activities that employees were engaged in and the company saw a remarkable improvement. Schedule adherence reached 85% per month in less than one quarter, and they have improved upon that success — some centers are now successfully maintaining over 90% adherence.

Finally, Drexel reorganized his Workforce Management Strategy team to focus on intermediate staffing needs (those in the upcoming weeks and months), thereby helping to pre-determine the level of skill up-training that would be necessary to maintain operations and ensure that it was completed within budget. Working with Planning Operations, the Workforce Management Strategy team was able to create a continuous review of the operation and provide staff schedules for potential classes months in advance. In this way, they have been able to ensure that the proper number of staff is always identified for possible up-training opportunities. This team also focused on scheduling upcoming refresher training sessions and team meetings to ensure effective coverage and minimize queue disruptions, while ensuring that needed training is completed in a timely manner.

As a result of all of the efforts described above, Vangent's contractual metric for ASA has been lowered and they are consistently providing service to the government at less than a three minute ASA.

The SWPP Board of Advisors selected the five finalists from nominations submitted on the SWPP website. The Workforce Management Professional of the Year award is chosen from the five finalists by the Board of Advisors and announced at the 2009 SWPP Annual Conference.

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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