



AN ARTICLE COMMEMORATING OUR 8TH YEAR IN BUSINESS.

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A-1 Personnel Celebrates 8 Years in Business



A-1 Personnel's partners (left to right): Lubo Mazurkiewicz, Vice President of Sales & Operations, Lynda Chapell, V. P. Administration and Gunther Wagner, President & C.E.O.

STORY & PHOTOS BY OTN STAFF PHOTOJOURNALIST

In mid February Ontario Trucking News had the pleasure of meeting with the owners of A-1 Personnel in Mississauga, Ontario. Our first encounter was with Lubo Mazurkiewicz, Vice President of Sales & Operations, who is responsible for A-1 Personnel's business development. Lubo explained that the company was founded in July 1998 as a low profile agency, advertising for job seekers in many fields. In addition to drivers and forklift operators, warehouse staff, A-1 provides industrial staff, transportation staff, logistics staff, skilled staff and office staff to its clients. He added that A-1 advertises its services in local papers and via radio and

that often clients and drivers recommend the agency by word of mouth.

Ontario Trucking News then met the other two partners of A-1. Lynda Chapell, V.P. Administration is responsible for all administrative matters of the business, and Gunther Wagner, President & CEO, who spends most of his time with financial, technology, and H.R. infrastructure matters.

Gunther gave us a brief history of the company. By July 1997, Lubo Mazurkiewicz and Lynda Chapell had each been in the temporary personnel placement business for more than 15 years, working as employees for a variety of different agencies. When they met again in early 1997 working for the same employer, they

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discussed the desirability of opening up their own agency.

However, while knowing the operational and administrative side of the business very well, they felt that they lacked the business management, organizational, and financial resource management skills that were necessary to succeed on their own.

In April of 1998, Lubo approached Gunther Wagner, retired, knowing that Mr. Wagner's background was in finance, technology, human resources and administration, and asked him to join in the start-up of a new personnel agency. Mr. Wagner agreed to an equal partnership with Lynda and Lubo, and in July 1998 A-1 opened its doors at 6685 Tomken Road in Mississauga, Ontario.

"When A-1 started out in the business, it decided that it needed to distinguish itself from many of the 1500 agencies that operate in the greater Toronto area (GTA)." Gunther explained, "We put our focus on two areas, first and most important is to understand the client's business, and to find clients that are willing to work with A-1 in a "partnership" arrangement

that respects the employees (field and office), and that treat and pay people fairly. The second focus was on developing a "worker assessment program" that would help A-1 finding job seekers with the standard of competence required to be considered for a job at A-1."

When signing up a new client and before sending a worker to work for that client, A-1 takes its dispatch representative to the client's facility to learn first hand what the job and the environment are all about.

Prospective workers are interviewed and skill-tested when they first apply at A-1. These processes help A-1 to match the workers skills with the client's requirements, significantly reducing what is often a mismatch that causes dissatisfaction all around.

Lubo described A-1 Personnel as a company with a spotless reputation. Dedication and determination has partnered A-1 with many of the Fortune 500 companies.

We use computerized databases not only to keep information about our clients and workers at our fingertips, but also to tailor our services to a client's needs. We pride ourselves

on our excellent, responsive and exclusive service. Our clients identify specific requirements related to the job. A-1 makes sure that the worker sent to fill the required position has the necessary skills.

He added that A-1 has developed a technological infrastructure not normally available in the industry. Clients can record their time-sheet information electronically, check A-1's records regarding the people that have been dispatched and when, including the hours each worker has worked to date. Clients can also access billing information that shows the rates charged for each individual worker, the total amount of the invoice, and they can request customized reports to support their own internal operations.

A-1's office is open from 7:00AM to 6:00PM and at no time do they use a message service. Cell-phones and 10-4 can be accessed at all times.

"In terms of drivers," Lubo specified, "We look for AZ and DZ local drivers. All drivers must: have a minimum of 2 years verifiable experience (1 year would be the exception), have a professional attitude, be a team player, have good



Show above are (left to right); Lubo Mazurkiewicz, Lynda Chapell, Derek Kearney, Patricia Wiseman, Gunther Wagner, Verica Burzovic, John Allingham and Tasha Palumbo.

English communication skills, be flexible in regard to shift work and have a clean current abstract and CVOR."

"A-1 Personnel specializes in full time positions," he continued "but we do have part-time positions available as well. Drivers can usually choose their start time and the days that they want to work. We tailor our service to driver availability and client's needs."

A-1 has recently decided to expand its driver assignments to include Canadian Highways in addition to local driving.

Gunther and Lynda elaborated on the work ethos professed by themselves and Lubo. "Partnership" with the client means that A-1 becomes one of the key or primary agencies working with that client, and that the client's philosophy about people, their treatment and safety coincides with that of A-1." said Lynda, "Clients know that when they call A-1 looking for a worker, that the person who arrives has the required skills, has been tested and reference-checked, and is reliable and dependable."

Gunther added, "The most important asset to any business is its people. You can replace equipment and even buildings but it is extremely hard to replace good people. This business is all about people.

The results of our personal expectations and efforts have been gratifying. A-1's business has grown steadily. We increased our office space from 900 square feet in 1998 to 3,600 square feet in 2005 to meet the ever-increasing demands. We are growing at the pace we have chosen for maximum efficiency and excellence"

Besides the three partners who are all active in the company, there are five employees:

Derek Kearney, who accompanied Lubo in welcoming us, is Operations Manager in charge of internal staff. He is responsible and accountable for developing new business for A-1, while maintaining the existing business and managing the operations/dispatch function of A-1.

Verica Burzovic, A-1's accountant is responsible for keeping the books, generating financial statements, meeting government filing deadlines, and assisting in the payroll function.

John Allingham, job-coordinator/dispatcher, is responsible for meeting client's request and needs for temporary workers. John told us that he gets a "sense of satisfaction from matching the candidate to the client."

Tasha Palumbo and Patricia Wiseman are job-coordinators/dispatchers with the same responsibil-

ities. Both Tasha and Patricia agreed that they enjoy the atmosphere of caring that pervades their workplace and the fact that A-1's clients come from a wide range of fields.

Lubo invited Ontario Trucking News to read some of the Letters of Endorsement that decorate the walls of the reception area. They were all complimentary and interesting. The following are excerpts from two of them, picked at random.

"A-1 Personnel is a truly professional employment agency and it is always a pleasure to deal with them because of the excellent service they provide. The staff at A-1 are very knowledgeable about our operational needs and understand our work environment. A-1 personnel was able to provide us quality staff in a tough market with sometimes little or very short notice"

"A-1 Personnel has proven their ability to provide quality drivers to our operation.

Prior to our relationship with A-1, we struggled daily with the quality of driver provided to us by other driver services. Since staffing with A-1 drivers, I have noticed a dramatic improvement in attendance, service and productivity."

OTN



Patricia, Lynda, Verica and Tasha enjoying their St. Valentine's Day bouquets.

