



CINTAS® Reduces Turnover, Improves Employee Communications with Fierce Conversations™

the company

Headquartered in Cincinnati, OH, CINTAS Corporation provides highly specialized services to businesses of all types throughout North America. Founded in 1929, CINTAS designs, manufactures and implements corporate identity uniform programs and provides entrance mats, restroom cleaning and supplies, promotional products, first aid and safety products, fire protection services and document management services for approximately 800,000 businesses.

CINTAS operates more than 400 facilities in the U.S. and Canada, including 11 manufacturing plants and eight distribution centers that employ more than 34,000 people. CINTAS has grown for 39 consecutive years, with fiscal 2008 sales of \$3.9 billion, an increase of 6% from 2007. Net income for the year was \$335 million, and earnings per diluted share increased 3 percent from \$2.09 last year to \$2.15 this year.

the challenge

CINTAS has long been a proponent of taking an active role in developing its culture, as opposed to simply letting it evolve organically. A key underlying tenet is "The CINTAS Way," the concept that culture is no accident. Since the company's founding as a family business by "Doc" Farmer, CINTAS has fostered a culture that encourages meaningful, respectful relationships between the company and its employee-partners as well as the commitment to always do what's right. These views are an intrinsic part of CINTAS' business strategy and drive the meaningful performance and behavior standards expected from each and every partner.

With CINTAS' corporate views paving the way, Matt Sharrers, CINTAS' Vice President of Sales, Northwest Central Pacific Region, was looking for tools to enable managers, directors, and leaders to engage in more meaningful discussions, particularly the sales reps.

"We didn't have any obvious, dramatic issues to address; however, like many sales organizations, we were concerned with turnover, and we were looking for ways to make our managers more effective and confident as leaders," clarifies Sharrers.

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MATT SHARRERS
VP SALES, NORTHWEST CENTRAL
PACIFIC REGION

the solution: fierce training

Sharrers is often referred to as a “thought leadership junkie” by his peers; when he read *Fierce Conversations* as part of his ongoing interest in enhancing company culture, the concepts immediately resonated with him. “Most of all, I was impressed by the authenticity of the models, especially focusing on the power of questions,” he explains.

He decided to bring Fierce into the company in an effort to teach people better communication skills and improve retention in the sales environment. The company began by holding some large general sessions for approximately 200 people at a time with a Fierce facilitator in 2002. CINTAS has since made Fierce a regular part of the leadership curriculum, holding sessions each year for a variety of people around the company.

In addition, Ryan Joswick, Sales Director, has become certified as a Fierce facilitator so that he can hold in-house training sessions and serve as an internal evangelist and subject matter expert within the company.

encouraging feedback

Sharrers has created a more open environment for his team since CINTAS’ relationship with Fierce, Inc. began. “I value different feedback more than I used to,” he says. “In the past, it didn’t matter who was right as long as it was me.” He says the Coaching and Confrontation models from Fierce are the most impactful. “I love the specificity of using the Coaching Conversation to say, ‘here’s what’s at stake.’ It’s a wonderful model.”

Most significantly, Sharrers says that changes have occurred with turnover on the sales team. In his region, CINTAS reaped a 20-30% return on investment from the Fierce curriculum at the sales rep level just by improving retention. He also says that CINTAS has developed 35-40 new leaders within the last three to four years in part through using Fierce models.

add fierce to your training toolkit

Our diverse, global client list underscores a basic truth: Business is fundamentally an extended conversation—with colleagues, customers and the unknown future emerging around us. Whether your focus is on implementing key initiatives, managing top talent, improving customer acquisition and retention, developing leaders, or simply igniting productive dialogue that generates clarity and impetus for change—success occurs one conversation at a time.

For more information about how Fierce can help your business, visit www.fierceinc.com or contact us at 425.283.1294.

fierce.®

CONVERSATIONS

ACCOUNTABILITY™

NEGOTIATIONS™

GENERATIONS™