

The Integer Group

CWCC Company of the Year Award Finalist – Medium

The Integer Group is not just an advertising agency that uses integrated communications as a delivery platform for retail expertise. It is a company that prides itself on growing its workforce from within and encouraging women to take leadership roles.

“The Integer Group strongly believes in growing its people,” said Jennine Friess, Communications Supervisor, The Integer Group. “Training is one of the most important resources in building our business. We are only as successful and strong as our people. People are our product. Therefore, we invest a large portion of our financial property in training and development.”

Exactly half of Integer’s senior leaders are women—7 of 14. Two of four C level senior employees are female, the CMO and CFO. Women comprise 53 percent of Integer’s staff, totaling 323 women.

Since women make up more than half of Integer’s workforce, the company offers several programs to assist women within the company and in business. One program focused on helping women in business is The Women of Integer, which includes group of director and above employees who meet quarterly for happy hours to discuss what is happening at the agency and what opportunities or challenges there are pertaining to Integer’s women workforce.

Integer also helps women employees on a personal level. Work/Life balance is important to Integer and they host Life Skills Lunch and Learns that range from stress management techniques to first homebuyer workshops. Since Integer employs many working mothers, the company tries to accommodate them by providing job share opportunities, part time positions, and even have a lactation room.

“Personal situations can affect someone’s ability to perform at work and what we want to do is provide an understanding environment for those who are going through a difficult time and let them know they are not alone,” said Friess. “For example, Integer has a Survivors Group, which are a group of women who have battled breast cancer who get together regularly to support each other and to offer help and advice.”

Integer also offers a variety of programs designed to encourage leadership and excellence. The Integer Leadership Institute (ILI) works to identify, develop and reward associates that exhibit leadership potential and the drive to be the future leaders in the Integer network. Throughout the program, there is significant interaction with the executive leaders from all of the Integer offices including Integer’s Chairman, CEO and office presidents. Participants also have the chance to network and build relationships with associates from all of the Integer offices.

Another program Integer offers to encourage employee learning is the Integer State (iState), which includes a large number of course offerings on a variety of subjects.

Integer associates, usually at the management level, teach most classes and the majority of classes take place during business hours on-site or at facilities close to the office. Each year, Integer adds and modifies classes based on company goals and associate interest. Some courses are mandatory and recommended classes are defined by level, department and client team.

Every Integer employee is eligible for the tuition reimbursement program, which provides the opportunity to take a maximum of five courses each calendar year. Integer reimburses up to \$700 per undergraduate course and \$100 per graduate course. Additionally, Integer provides job flexibility for leadership programs and external seminars/conferences/tradeshows. Employees are encouraged to attend seminars or enroll in programs that are focused on their discipline.

In addition to supporting women in business internally, Integer helps support women-owned companies outside the business. In 2009, Integer worked with 31 woman-owned companies, with services ranging from legal, print production, and graphic design to freelancers, such as professional consultants and artists.