

Devotion To Truth



Pictured are Bridgette Cassety and Laura Otander, co-owners of Veracity Benefit Designs.

Veracity Benefit Designs Continues To Expand

By MANLEY J. ANDERSON

Many businesses would like to have the growth record of one founded in Buffalo in 1999 by a woman now living in Asheville and which also includes a location in Jamestown since that year, along with a satellite office in Olean.

Veracity Benefit Designs, with its local office at 513 W. Third St., has grown by more than 35 percent each year since its founding and is looking for opportunities to expand further.

The word veracity, from which the company got its name means devotion to truth, truthfulness, conformity with fact and accuracy.

The founder of the benefit designs business is Laura A. Otander who has worked for 25 years in the employee benefits field and is president of the company serving Western New York and northwestern Pennsylvania.

Joining with her in a partnership in February 2000 was Bridgette J. Cassety as vice president, with the two previously working together at Buffalo-based North American Health Plan.

Both saw a need for assisting employers navigate the maze of health care and employee benefits programs, along with their wide range of options.

"We have close to 400 clients," Mrs. Otander said of the extent of their business. "We have three teams handling clients with less than 10 employees, another team for clients from 10 to 50 employees and a third team for those with 51 and more employees."

"We built our company on a background of service," its president said. "We're always looking at options for growth. We're always looking for good people."

Mrs. Otander became more specific, explaining. "We're looking to hire an administrative assistant in Jamestown in the next couple of months and then a sales manager next and then possibly a service representative after that. It's

all due to good people."

The company president said it does considerable work over the internet.

"Our busy time is right now — enrollment season," she explained. "We have a good ratio of employees to clients."

The company offers a wide range of products to meet individualized needs of any company.

Before starting her own business, Mrs. Otander was sales director for North American.

She has extensive experience in the health care field with Mass Mutual and Warren General Hospital and has worked as a self-employed insurance broker.

Mrs. Otander has a degree in business administration from University of Buffalo and holds a Charter Life Underwriter designation and is a registered employee benefit consultant.

She is treasurer and past president of the Society of Financial Professions and has been active in Chautauqua Region Association of Insurance & Financial Advisors, Jamestown Area Estate Planning Council, Randolph Children's Home as a trustee for eight years and Blue Cross/Blue Shield Broker Advisory Board.

Mrs. Otander and her husband, Randy, live on a farm where she enjoys gardening and raising miniature Herefords. She is an active runner and has completed the Marine Corps Marathon.

Mrs. Cassety is an Alfred University graduate, a board member of Health for All and a certified foster parent.

Before joining Mrs. Otander, she served as sales director for Univera and has extensive experience in the health care field with North American Health Care Plan as well as spending time with Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Independent Health.

She enjoys traveling and reading and lives in Amherst with her husband and three children.

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— Laura Otander,

Veracity Benefit Designs owner/president