

# Company Culture Breeds Independence, Commitment



***“We lay out the goals, explain what we want to accomplish, and let the team go do it any way they want.”***

—Paul Giobbi,  
Co-founder and President,  
Zumasy's Inc.

## Tech Firm Zumasy's Uses Trust to Tap Workers' Best

By KIM HAMAN

Nine years ago, someone special walked into Zumasy's Inc.'s Irvine headquarters for a job interview for a warehouse position.

At first, neither the interviewers nor the applicant knew how special he was—that he possessed that indefinable quality that Zumasy's cofounder and President Paul Giobbi values most.

After the interview, the job candidate, Dave McCary, stopped by the receptionist's desk and wrote a thank-you note—he had just moved to California from Nashville, Tenn.,

and was grateful for the opportunity to interview. The receptionist delivered the note to Giobbi and the others while McCary was on the way to his car. Before he could leave, a manager ran out and offered him the job on the spot.

McCary proved an asset in Zumasy's warehouse operations, Giobbi said. But in the president's eyes, he was better suited to sales.

It was a straight-commission job, and McCary was hesitant. With a new baby at home, having a steady paycheck was appealing. But he took the risk and now, a decade later, is the company's manager of software sales and a spokesperson for the company.

Giobbi said he's proud he played a role in McCary's quick progression at the company, but he's quick to point out that it's that “special something” McCary had that made him successful.

He said he hires by “gut” and that every person on his team has an entrepreneurial spirit and passion. That, along with his belief that every person he hires deserves full trust right from the get-go, has made Zumasy's one of the top revenue-generating technology integrators in the U.S.

It's also the reason Zumasy's was chosen as Orange County's best place to work in the medium-sized business category (see list, page 35).

### Partners in Success

The company, founded in 2000, is one of the leading providers of cloud computing and technology services in the U.S., according to CRN's Solution Provider (SP500) list, which ranks the top revenue-generating technology integrators in the U.S. and Canada.

It was also named by Inc. magazine as one of the fastest-growing companies in the country and listed in the top five in the 2012 and 2013 Business Journal Best Places to Work list of small companies.

Zumasy's chief operating officer, Jennifer McGraw, was named to the CRN Women of the Channel and Power 50 Solution Providers, an elite list of female executives at solution provider organizations.

Last year, the company hit the \$25 million revenue mark—a milestone, McGraw said. And while Giobbi said employees are proud of its achievements, he said that when it comes down to it, it takes great people to make a great company. That's why hiring the right person from the outset is so vital, he said.

“We operate largely with the concept of self-management. Employees—team members—are given the freedom and flexibility to make decisions. We take the chains off.”

Giobbi said he maintains a minimalist management structure. In the dynamic world of high-tech, and especially in the developing cloud computing segment, companies must be nimble and employees free to make decisions because conditions can change very quickly, he said.

### Setting Employees Free

When Zumasy's hires, it looks for candidates with the right technological background and those with determination and the ability to manage themselves and achieve goals Giobbi said.

“We lay out the goals, explain what we want to accomplish, and let the team go do it any way they want.”

The president has designated office hours and said any employee, no matter the position, is free to come in and share their ideas with him. If an idea is good for the company, he said Zumasy's will implement it.

Members of the tech support team came to

► Zumasy's 29



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# Zumasys

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Giobbi several years ago with the suggestion that an imposed time limit for each incoming phone call be eliminated—they wanted to be able to stay on the phone as needed to make sure they thoroughly understood customers' issues, no matter the length of time the call took. Giobbi agreed—and the time limits ended.

### An Epiphany

Giobbi said he's worked to create a company culture in which employees feel valued and appreciated. Five years ago, in the thick of the recession, he said that was a different story. The company's revenue was dropping, and he was worried about losing talented people, so he created an incentive: international travel.

Giobbi grew up traveling the world with his parents, who loved to visit other countries, and said he was grateful for the opportunity to learn from the experiences.

Through the new incentive, team members are given \$4,000 and a full week off with pay to travel in order of seniority. The only requirement is that they must travel outside of the United States and upon their return share their stories and photos with the rest of the team.

There are about four employee trips a year, and 19 people have taken advantage of the incentive, including McGraw, who visited England with her husband, her first time outside the states.

### Out-of-the-Box Benefits

Since then, Zumasys has expanded its programs, including the "1% program," which sets aside 1% of the company's annual revenues to give to charities.

Then it created the "Happiness Is a Choice" program, which provides incentives for employees to deepen their involvement in volunteerism and charitable giving.

Zumasys matches donations of any amount and allocates 10% of the total to support people in need who employees know personally.

"Through the Happiness is a Choice program, Zumasys was generous enough to donate not only to nonprofit charities that I nominated but to a personal friend of mine that was sick and struggling financially," said **Kate Goetting**, office administrator. "It is hard to put into words how much that means to me personally."

The company sets aside an additional 1% of company revenues for employees to spend on career development, to obtain additional certifications, or even to pursue personal interests.

It offers other incentives, such as its President's Club rewards for top producers. It also provides top-of-the-line health, medical, dental, 401(k), and bonus programs for every employee level, McGraw said.

### Into the Clouds

Giobbi said he's honored that the people on his team have chosen Zumasys as the No. 1 medium-sized business to work for in Orange County.

"It means more to me than anything else." Zumasys is experiencing growth at a fast clip: The company now serves nearly 2,000 customers, up from 550 in 2009.

Employees seem to appreciate the manner in which it got there.

**Michelle Watson**, cloud relationship manager, said it inspires her to stretch herself in her work.

"The culture here has made my job fulfilling in a way I did not expect," she said. "I am working harder now than ever before, and it feels really good." ■



*Company executive visited England with her husband through company incentive program, her first time outside the U.S.*

—Jennifer McGraw,  
Chief Operating Officer,  
Zumasys Inc.

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