

# Fostering Staff Engagement by Putting People First

Accounting and business advisory firm **Plante Moran** stands true to its founder's vision of an organization centered on high-touch relationships, transparency, and trust.

PLANTE MORAN STAFF MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN TOUR DE TROIT, DOWNTOWN DETROIT'S LARGEST SINGLE BIKE RIDE.



## THE UNIQUE CULTURE AT PLANTE MORAN

is rooted in what co-founder Frank Moran once called his "grand experiment." He wanted to create an accounting firm where the best practitioners couldn't wait to get in the door and clients were lining up to receive unsurpassed service. Moran believed that to attract and develop talented people, it was necessary to subscribe to a system where values prevailed. In short, Plante Moran would be "a people organization disguised as an accounting firm."

Today, nearly a century later, Frank Moran's vision pervades the country's 14th largest accounting and business advisory firm. With more than 2,200 employees, the Michigan-based organization is "grounded in the belief that if you really want to be a people organization, you have to create an environment centered around high-touch relationships, transparency, and trust," says recently named partner Mandy Chardoul.

To that end, Plante Moran's leadership has focused on creating a culture where people's needs come first and each staff member is treated like a business owner. The company began implementing policies such as a flexible work schedule long before such initiatives became popular. Years ago, it convened a WorkFlex Committee designed to help

staff balance their personal and professional lives. Its emphasis on developing relationships and advancing people remains an effective tool for recruitment and retention.

Just ask Chardoul, who returned to Plante Moran four years ago after leaving for what seemed like a once-in-a-lifetime oppor-



tunity at another company. After a brief time there, Chardoul realized where she belonged. "I learned that there's never a longer day than one spent working somewhere you don't want to be. A job might look like it checks all the boxes—but if the organization doesn't have a strong culture, none of it really matters."

The benefits of Plante Moran's people-first culture are reflected in both its staff retention and its bottom line. Turnover rate has averaged less than 13% in the past 10 years—one of the lowest in the industry. In a recent survey, 99% of those polled said that the company is honest, courteous, and trustworthy, and that it delivers on its promises. Nearly the same proportion said that its people invest the time to build relationships and understand client needs. As Frank Moran might tell you: When a company puts people first, a grand experiment can yield remarkable results. ■



STAFF MEMBERS GATHER AT PLANTE MORAN'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO CELEBRATE THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ONE ANOTHER.

