

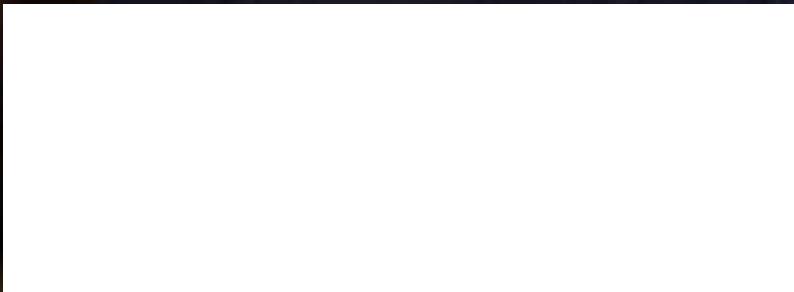
CNY C-Suite™

A PUBLICATION FOR CNY EXECUTIVES

CPS Recruitment

SUSAN CROSSETT, CEO

Thirty-Five Years and Growing



ON THE INSIDE:

- Succession Planning
- Embracing Growth Together

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AND GROWING WHAT'S NEXT FOR CPS RECRUITMENT? STRONG PRESENCE IN ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

By: Martha Conway

CPS Recruitment was founded in 1989 by Laurie Liechty under the names Contemporary Personnel Staffing and Professionals Incorporated. These companies were joined under the name CPS Recruitment in 2015. When Liechty was preparing to sell the business and retire, she approached Susan Crossett about doing some consulting work for her to help prepare for the transition. This consulting opportunity brought their relationship full circle, since Crossett's first professional job out of college was in staffing and recruitment. She began her career as a recruiter at the J.W. Willard agency, hired by Liechty herself.

Crossett was born, raised, and educated in Central New York. A graduate of C.W. Baker in Baldwinsville, she earned her bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration from Syracuse University. For the past four years, she has been the leader of CPS Recruitment headquartered in Liverpool, which is celebrating its 35th anniversary this year.

Crossett worked in recruitment for about 18 months before taking a position with Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC). While at ABC, Crossett honed her lobbying skills representing contractors' issues before the state Legislature. From there, she continued her lobbying career working for the Manufacturers Association of Central New York (MACNY). As a result of her legislative work on Workers' Compensation issues, Crossett was then appointed to serve as the First Special Assistant to the Workers' Compensation Board Chairman. Building upon her lobbying career, Crossett transitioned to Carrier Corporation, representing the company in the states where Carrier had manufacturing facilities. Working closely with Niagara Mohawk on a new electric supply contract for Carrier led to her being recruited to work for Niagara Mohawk, heading up their government affairs department. Crossett had several roles at National Grid, ultimately as the officer responsible for U.S. economic development and community investment. After leaving National Grid, Crossett worked for the Sisters of Saint Francis of the Neumann Communities overseeing their incorporated ministries, including hospitals and long-term care facilities among others. She also consulted on energy matters for clients of Harris Beach, LLC.



Susan Crossett, CEO, CPS Recruitment

Crossett did her homework during the consulting project with Liechty, saw the long-established business as a good turnkey investment and put in a successful offer against other contenders. She took the helm of CPS Recruitment Jan. 4, 2020 – right before the COVID lockdown.

“We had just had the best month in the history of the company,” Crossett said. “Then COVID hit, and the state mandated the vast majority of our clients to shut down operations. Our business experienced an immediate slowdown and companies stopped hiring.”



Front to Back: Steve Schanz, Director of Engineering Recruitment, Joy Rinaldi, COO
Nate Desimone, VP of Sales, Susan Crossett, CEO

Through perseverance and tenacity, Crossett and her team made sure CPS Recruitment recovered. She expanded the business, adding staff to locations in Buffalo, Binghamton, Washington, D.C., and Charlotte, N.C. Over the years, the firm has grown to 30 people.

"We are a local company supporting local businesses while also growing outside of our region," she said, explaining that CPS Recruitment also serves national clients.

"I can't take a lot of credit for building the team," Crossett said. "The team was in place when I bought the company. It's one of the reasons I wanted to buy it; I felt it would be a nice fit for me. There are people with more than 20 years of history here, and the average length of employment among our employees is greater than 10 years."

She said the reason the team is so successful is their commitment to clients and candidates, and she is doing whatever she can to cultivate that environment.

"Letting team members have the ability to do what they do best is the most important thing I can do," Crossett said. "We set goals together, then I let them go."

Crossett gives her staff the support and tools they need to do their jobs and provides a flexible hybrid work environment allowing for work-life balance.

Crossett said she embraces a collaborative leadership style. She is transparent about acknowledging areas that aren't her strength and relies on her partnerships with her team – as well as industry colleagues – to help her promote an atmosphere of continuous learning and growth. She said she has held 'team mix-up' events where different staff are grouped together to brainstorm ideas for continuous improvement.

"They came up with some really great ideas, decided what they wanted to accomplish and developed plans for how to go about it," Crossett said. "Everyone works very well together."

Crossett said that teamwork doesn't just evidence itself in theory or tabletop exercises, either. She said CPS Recruitment has had a number of situations where clients needed to ramp up staffing levels in a very short span of time.

"Rather than the client needing to hire additional human resources staff to fill hundreds of positions, our team bands together and works to get it done," she said. "We all work to consistently exceed client expectations and satisfy their growth needs."

Crossett said there is tremendous satisfaction in not only supplying staff to meet employers' needs, but also in helping a wide array of people to find jobs.



L to R: Steve Schanz, Director of Engineering Recruitment, Nate Desimone, VP of Sales
Suzanne Benderski, Chief of Staff



L to R: Steve Schanz, Director of Engineering Recruitment, Nate Desimone, VP of Sales, Susan Crossett, CEO, Suzanne Benderski, Chief of Staff
Ashly Hildreth, Manufacturing Recruiter, Joy Rinaldi, Chief Operating Officer

"From placing a senior vice president to helping someone find their very first job – we work with a lot of new Americans to help them find jobs," she said. "It's incredibly gratifying."

CPS Recruitment searches for potential candidates for short- and long-term temporary assignments as well as direct hires; their areas of expertise include software and hardware engineers, accounting professionals at all levels, supply chain professionals, administrative and call center roles, IT, technology and engineering, project management, supply chain, healthcare, warehouse fulfillment and manufacturing positions from production to senior management.

Crossett said she is bullish on the future of the region, as manufacturing is making a big come-back.

"We have already begun growing our specialized vertical in advanced manufacturing," she said. "We have always served the manufacturing industry, but we are preparing additional dedicated recruiters – getting them the information and training they need – to focus on this specialty."

I can't emphasize enough the need for more workers in our region so we can match talent needs with skills needed."

CPS Recruitment uses a variety of strategies to find the specialized staff they seek.

"We attend and host job fairs, connect with job-training programs, do extensive networking and sourcing, utilize all the major job boards and niche sites, such as ThisisCNY.com, and post to the major social media outlets, including Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn," she said.

Partnering with CPS Recruitment provides employers and employees with the opportunity to ensure a good fit before either party commits to permanent employment.

"We can also provide help for project work," Crossett said, "and these employees work until the project is done. This is an ideal situation for people who only want to work for a limited time, or, say, only want to work winters. There are professionals who may want to work on certain projects that can expand their resume, but not necessarily commit to a single company and doing the same thing for many years."

CPS Recruitment, through relationship-building and team development, has cultivated a network of long-term relationships that has positioned them as a trusted partner to their clientele.

“One of the ways we do this is by really listening to our clients’ needs,” Crossett said. “We take the time to truly understand the nuances of the job, and we do the same thing for potential employees. We work with firms of all sizes, and they appreciate that we are all trying to do a good job for them. Being here 35 years later, we must have gotten a lot of things right.”

Crossett believes there are clients who are familiar with one facet of what CPS Recruitment does but aren’t aware of the other services they provide.

“Professional staff may not know we do temporary and contract work.” she said. “There are a lot of different aspects of the business. We pride ourselves in being partners with our clients and candidates, rather than just having transactional relationships. Our efforts to be an extension of the team on the client side and to truly partner with candidates has served us very well, and if we don’t have anything that seems like a good fit on one side or the other, we’re honest about that and tell them we’ll keep looking. These efforts cultivate the relationships that truly set us apart from others.”

Susan Crossett, CEO, CPS Recruitment



CPS
Recruitment®

Hire expectations. Hire results.



L to R: Suzanne Benderski, Chief of Staff, Ashly Hildreth, Manufacturing Recruiter, Joy Rinaldi, Chief Operating Officer



Numerous Best Places to Work trophies
Susan Crossett, CEO - Key4Women Community Leadership Award - 2023
Susan Crossett, CEO – CenterstateCEO Race for Equity Partner - 2023
Centerstate CEO Economic Champions Award - 2023

**For more information,
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