

LYONS HR

Bill J. Lyons, Chairman & CEO, Lyons HR, has created an employee-centric company. This attitude starts at the top and permeates throughout the organization because as important as clients are, Bill believes employees are even more vital to the company's success. "If we take care of our people first, we know they will take care of our clients. To that end, we believe in finding the best and brightest employees, paying them as much as we can afford to pay them, and then empowering them to own their responsibilities," he says. "Ideas are worthless with creativity and technology is nothing without proficient users. It is the human element that makes or breaks a business."

The company's mission grew out of needs recognized among the nation's 30 million small business owners. Over 48% of the American workforce is employed by a small business, defined by the Small Business Administration as having fewer than 500 employees, but most small business owners are not experts in human resources and that leaves them vulnerable to turnover, lawsuits, or worse. That's why PEOs like Lyons HR can be the best friend the small business owner ever had. By removing the administrative burdens of payroll, benefits, risk, and HR compliance, small business owners can devote their time and attention to more profitable pursuits like perfecting their products or services and growing their business. "It is our belief that PEOs offer the most comprehensive suite of services to help small businesses and that led us to this industry," adds Bill.

According to the steadfast leader, the PEO industry is less than 40 years old, and there are fewer than 500 total competitors. So, while there is competition, it is friendly and in some cases, PEOs even refer clients to other PEOs if they have an area of specialization. It is a close-knit industry and friendships run deep. Of greater concern are companies that promote themselves as providing the same comprehensive service offering as PEOs but are little more than a payroll and HR software platform. "These technology platforms, commonly referred to as SaaS, or "Software as a Service," have grown in popularity due to relentless advertising on radio and social media but they are for the most part, self-service. By contrast, PEOs believe technology is a tool to be used in delivering great service, but technology is not itself the service."

Many long-term PEO clients first discover PEOs while shopping for lower-cost health or workers' compensation insurance. It is only after becoming a client that the real value of the relationship becomes very clear. "Virtually every new PEO client is unknowingly out of compliance with one or more employment laws when they sign on with the PEO, Bill explains. But not knowing the law does not excuse any company from complying, and it only takes one disgruntled former employee who files a complaint with the EEOC or the DOL to reorganize a business owner's priorities completely. As co-employers of the client company's employees, the PEO is also liable for the employment practices of its new client, so it makes sense for the PEO to do a complete assessment of their client's overall HR strategy at the outset of the relationship."

Lyons HR has successfully transitioned from a small regional PEO into one of the largest privately held PEOs in the country, and they have done this without sacrificing the personalized service their clients grew accustomed to. Lyons HR employs certified HR managers who are geographically located so they can provide onsite support when needed. Lyons HR is not a recruiting firm, though they frequently advise clients on the best recruiting strategies to fill those hard-to-find roles. They provide professional development and training to employees along with access to benefit offerings that are usually only available to larger corporations. "These services help improve the culture of our clients and that is the most important factor in attracting and retaining the best employees and reducing turnover," says Bill. "We use technology to automate where we must, but we never want to get so big that our clients can't pick up the phone and call their HR manager when they need to speak to someone."

Lyons HR is pleased to have recently launched a new national group health plan through United Healthcare. UHC is the largest Healthcare company in the country with the most comprehensive network of hospitals and physicians. By partnering with UHC, Lyons HR can provide affordable group health coverage to employees in all 50 states and they are one of only thirteen PEOs in the country to have a UHC group health plan. **IE**

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Bill J. Lyons,
Chairman & CEO