

TOP WORKPLACES:

Leading by example



The News Journal/SUCHAT PEDERSON

Mike Nardo, CEO of FuturTech in New Castle, says he's not the type of manager who sits in his office and delegates. He frequently pitches in to help workers finish projects on time.

SMALL COMPANY LEADER

FuturTech CEO wears many hats

By AARON NATHANS
The News Journal

Mike Nardo is a man who inspires loyalty by example, his employees say.

Nardo inspires hard work, they say, by showing up around 6:30 a.m. and leaving some nights as late as 9. Employees note that he'll pitch in on projects, like helping get a writing project done on time.

"I think people have different management styles," he said. "Mine is not where I sit in an office and delegate everything."

Nardo, CEO and owner of FuturTech Consulting in New Castle, was voted the top leader among small-sized companies in the 2010 Top Workplaces survey, commissioned by The News Journal through Workplace Dynamics.

FuturTech provides technology maintenance, and outsourced network services for governments and businesses.

It designs computer networks, and offers product sales and service. It has a help desk that its clients can call anytime, day or night.

Its clients include New Castle County, the Smyrna School District, and the state Department of Labor, as well as local restaurants, physicians' offices and nonprofits.

About three-quarters of FuturTech Consulting's 35 employees have been there more than five years, and one longtime staffer said they work diligently because they see him doing the same.

"It's like being in a family," said Maureen Jones, the company's executive assistant who has known Nardo

for decades, since when they worked together in the Delaware Attorney General's Office, where he served as director of administration and operation. She's been at FuturTech since 1998. "There's nothing stuffy here, and he's not stuffy at all, not even a little bit. He's demanding to work for, but that's not a bad thing."

One employee who commented in the Workplace Dynamics questionnaire said Nardo knows the value of family life: "He instills hard work and dedication on his employees, but at the same time he does not let us forget that family is first."

Another noted, "He is not unwilling to put on many different hats to help those who work for him get the job done."

He opened FuturTech in 1996 with four employees. The company has grown to about 35 employees. It had as many as 40 last year, but some employees have left and Nardo has not replaced them.

FuturTech has muddled its way through the recession, and these last six months have been especially tough, he said. Even as its number of clients has increased, governments and businesses are trying to cut back on spending, Nardo said.

"We're feeling it like everyone else," he said.

But Jones said employees believe in Nardo and his company.

"He's worked very hard to keep us all employed and make his business grow," she said.

Contact Aaron Nathans at 324-2786 or anathans@delawareonline.com.