

# Innovation Creates Opportunities

BY PATTI PFARRER

MUCH HAS CHANGED in the workplace over the last year, as we all know. The ability to adapt was essential if companies wanted to stay in business, and adjustments to the usual business operations were required. Accommodations for protecting employees' and customers' safety and well-being against the spread of COVID-19 was critical if a company wanted to continue to serve its clients' needs. With the universal change that the pandemic brought to the workplace, many new perspectives emerged on how to accomplish the same goals. The one common thread is that businesses had to innovate to survive and succeed.

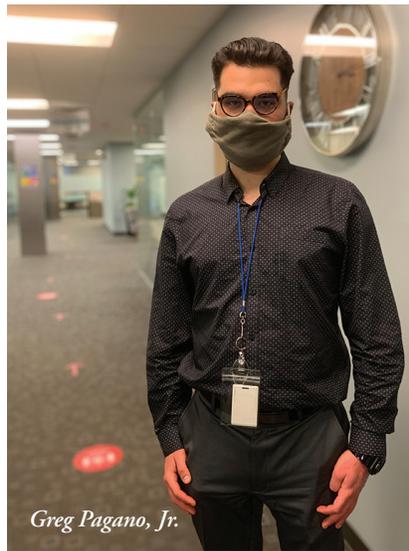
Change can be challenging, but it is inevitable. Embracing innovation and new ideas is necessary for a company to continue to evolve, grow and prosper. It was precisely the value placed on innovation that drove Ernie Dianastasis to start The Precisionists, Inc. (TPI) in 2016, and set a mission to create 10,000 jobs for individuals with developmental disabilities by the year 2025.

TPI is a national company, headquartered in Wilmington, Delaware, focused on providing industry best practices for delivering administrative and technology services to its clients, such as M&T Bank, the State of Delaware's Department of Finance and Delmarva Power. What makes TPI's approach innovative is that in order to deliver on our projects, we utilize the talents of our employees who work on teams comprised of both neurodiverse and neurotypical professionals.

TPI works in tandem on two primary business focus areas. One where we engage with and meet each customer's specific needs to deliver projects with the highest degree of productivity, and the other is employing neurodiverse individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities, a population who typically experiences an 80% under-/unemployment rate.

TPI works with our customers to identify projects which would benefit from the unique skills and abilities that our employees possess, like attention to detail, pattern recognition, accuracy, and precision. For example, when we partnered M&T, we identified several project areas where we could provide support, such as in systems administration, fraud/non-fraud credit transactions, and data solutions reporting. Since then, great support has been delivered on all these projects.

M&T Bank is realizing the value in implementing this innovative



model. "As a company that is committed to growing a diverse workforce, we support the work by The Precisionists to nurture the talents and strengths of people with diverse abilities," said Nick Lambrow, M&T Bank's Delaware regional president. "The employees we brought in from The Precisionists have been reliable contributors to our team."

We remove some of the barriers that many individuals with developmental disabilities face when seeking employment, like the traditional job interview. Instead, TPI has its candidates complete a 3- or 4-week assessment and training program so they can demonstrate their skills, motivation, and ability to perform in our jobs. Once hired, our employees work on blended teams, and are supported when navigating challenges the professional workforce presents.

Greg Pagano, Jr., a data analyst, who works on TPI's M&T project team reflected on what working for The Precisionists means to him. "TPI has changed my life in very special ways. I enjoy being in a professional work environment, and I feel satisfied and accomplished. TPI is a friendly, tranquil and tolerant workplace. We work hard, but we also have a good time."

It is evident that innovation is crucial for businesses to continue to succeed and grow. Businesses who embrace neurodiversity in their workplace, those who include this new way of accomplishing the same goals in their business model, will realize many benefits this innovative approach provides. What we at TPI have found is that once given the opportunity to work, individuals with diverse abilities perform with a high level of productivity, are fiercely loyal, and maintain a great work ethic. The Precisionists can help your company realize the benefits this untapped talent pool can provide to your business, while also giving an often-overlooked group of talented people a real chance for life success. ■



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