

My Benesch My Team Campaign – Dwellworks

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Authors: [Ira C. Kaplan](#)

“The entire Benesch team has invested in Dwellworks. They know our business and they know us personally, so each phone call and meeting is productive. They know how to help us.”

Bob Rosing, President and CEO
Gene Novak, Executive Vice President and Chief Development Officer
Dwellworks

When you run a relocation services business, you know a thing or two about being on the move. Over the last 8 years, Dwellworks has been in constant motion, with Benesch right alongside. From the company’s initial private equity funding through 10 acquisitions, two recapitalizations, multiple financings and the day-to-day realities of running a global business, Bob, Gene and their team trust Benesch to help them keep moving in the right direction.

Below is a testimonial from Dwellworks President and CEO Bob Rosing and Dwellworks Executive Vice President and Chief Development Officer Gene Novak.

Tell me about Dwellworks.

Gene - We are in the corporate relocation business, assisting relocation management companies with a variety of the services they provide to the Global 1000. We’re in three businesses: (1) appraisals for the purpose of a buying out an employee’s home in a corporate relocation; (2) property management, primarily for U.S. expats going overseas on assignments; and (3) destination services, our biggest business, which involves helping people coming into a country become oriented to the area, settle in and find a home. We do that in eight countries outside the US: Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica and Brazil in the Americas and the U.K., Germany, Austria and Luxembourg in Europe. Another service we do on a global basis is intercultural training-preparing an assignee and his/her family for working, living and playing in their new location; really understanding the culture, the customs, the social norms, the work environment, and so on. Dwellworks has about 250 employees and is headquartered in Cleveland, where many of our back-office functions take place.

How did you start working with Benesch?

Gene - Bob and I were at a relocation management company and then had a vision and dream of starting this relocation support services business. We had a long, 20+ year relationship with [Benesch Executive Chairman and partner] Ira Kaplan and he and Benesch were there from the start

of Dwellworks. We conceived the idea for the company in 2006 and incorporation was in May 2007. Ira facilitated the private equity arrangement that originally funded the business, and Benesch has been with us through 10 acquisitions, two recapitalizations, and a couple different financings. Benesch has also been there helping us with the corporate side-things like HR, payroll, labor, independent contractor activity, financing activity and intellectual property.

I'd say we've worked with 25 different attorneys at Benesch in just about every category, and they all provide terrific work. We've gotten our money's worth from Benesch, along with billable expansion, so we feel comfortable saying Benesch is our full-service law firm and when we have a question, we call Benesch.

Did you found the business with the idea that you would be international?

Bob - To be honest, no. We'd like to say it was part of the original, brilliant strategy, but the best part about it is that we listened to our customers and it was their idea. That's the real brilliance of the strategy. Our customers took us there because we were good at what we did here, so it was a nice compliment that they wanted us do it elsewhere. We had done business globally when we were at our prior business, so it wasn't like it was an outrageous idea, but it wasn't in our original plan. Our first five years in business we were in the U.S. only. Our growth into other countries came through acquisition and also some organic greenfield builds.

What do you like best about working with Benesch?

Bob - Relative to Ira Kaplan, and this carries over to the other Benesch folks he's introduced us to, he's 100% somebody you trust; that's first. Second, you enjoy working with him because he's a real human being. He's a brilliant lawyer, but he's also a brilliant human being. He's a good guy and you have complete trust in him. And he's obviously smart; he has an aptitude for business and he's been involved in so many transactions in businesses along the way that he has multiple points of reference to draw from. His insights and perspectives are very keen and very relevant. And because of that, he also knows what he doesn't know. He introduces us to the right people at Benesch who, because of the way that firm has grown up, tend to be people who are very like-minded in their approach to business and their values. People like Megan Mehalko, Mark Avsec, Julie Price, Mike Buck, Rick Tracanna - they're all brilliant, but without big egos - a real team.

Gene - Clearly, starting with Ira, the entire team has invested in Dwellworks. They know our business and they know us personally, so each phone call and meeting is productive. They know how to help us. We have our own General Counsel, who has one attorney on staff, and a paralegal to assist them and a rotating legal intern every spring/summer, so we have internal capability for transactional matters, but know when to throw one over the fence for Benesch to handle.

I know Dwellworks has been successful and won awards. Is more growth in your future?

[Bob Rosing] We are PE-owned and have just been recapitalized at the end of last year. We have a growth plan to continue to build on our platform to do network management through independent contractors, including additional geographies and some additional verticals over time. So we do want to continue to grow and feel like we have the team that can do that.

We have won a few awards. For example, we've been one of the Best Places to Work three different times and our internship program won Coolest Internship in NE Ohio this past year. As important as the company winning awards because of our position in the community, our clients have showered us with a lot of awards, and that's a sheer testament to our team. They're very dedicated, hard-working, and low turnover, and with low turnover comes lots of experience. They're just good at what they do.

Anything else you'd like to note?

Gene - With respect to Bob's comments about growth and our team, we're very fortunate. We thoroughly enjoy what we do. We enjoy our team and we enjoy our customers, and that's at the heart of our growth strategy. We come in every day with the purpose of focusing on our customers and our team, and if you do those things right, growth happens.

It sounds corny, but we're a values-based business. We've got our values up on the wall of every one of our offices. That's the umbrella under which we founded and continue to operate the business. As long as we focus on those things, it's with comfort and confidence that we look to the future. Our intent is to continue to grow and go where our customers want us to go with them. As a result of that, we've assembled a very solid group of professional advisors, and we think that Benesch is at the top of that list.