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Technology focus, millennial workforce drive Kirsch Transportation Services

by Dwain Hebda

Kirsch Transportation Services, based in Council Bluffs, has established itself in the logistics market on the strength of nimble operations. The company has grown 65 percent over the last five years and is on pace to close 2016 over \$40 million in sales.

The company has a classic trucking lineage — owners Camilla Moore Kirsch and her son, Matthew Kirsch, come from a long line of family in trucking — but is anything but typical in structure. For one thing, the firm's 43-person workforce trends much younger than average and it's no coincidence the company focuses on technology to serve customers.

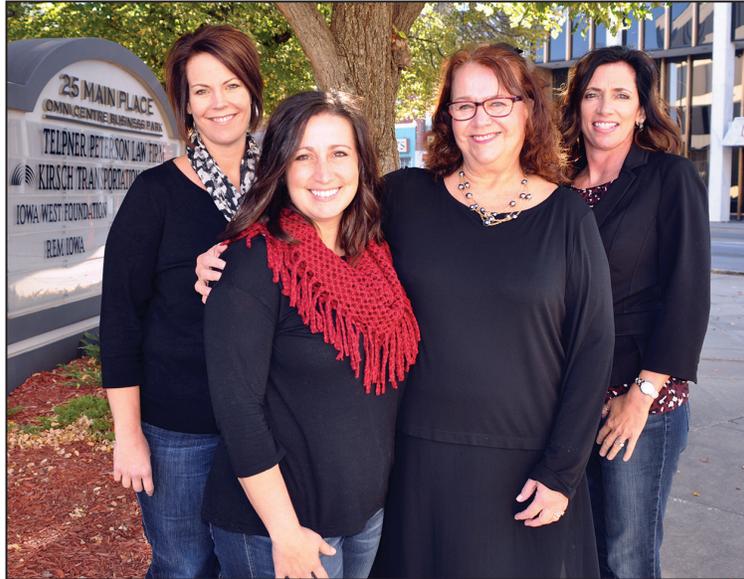
"Probably four out of five hires are part of the millennial generation," said Jeremy Becker, COO.

"They bring a whole different side of understanding technology, which is a huge part of our business. We do not own any assets; all that we have on our site is technology and customer service. They bring the technology and we teach the customer service."

Another unique element of Kirsch operations is the high percentage of women in leadership roles. In an industry so male-dominated it's notable to have one woman at the executive level, Kirsch features four, including CEO Kirsch; CFO Kelli Gleck-



Becker



From left, Vice President National Accounts Shauna Morfeld, CFO Kelli Gleckler, CEO Camilla Kirsch and Director of Operations Jennifer Brownell... Seeing sales growth with technology investments, leadership approach.

ler; Jennifer Brownell, director of operations; and Shauna Morfeld, vice president of national accounts.

The presence of so many women in leadership roles demonstrates Kirsch's merit-based hiring and promotion philosophy, just one element of a company culture that has proven to be a key recruitment and retention tool.

Becker knows this firsthand. Prior to joining the company six years ago, he spent almost two decades in the trucking business. He had his fill of the industry by 2010, before a friend suggested he interview with Kirsch.

"I came from the asset-based side of the business, which means I'd competed against the broker-age sector," he said.

Becker said it was Camilla Kirsch's passion for her business

and concern for her employees that turned him from looking to change careers to joining the company as chief operating officer, and these elements

have played a major role in the firm's ability to attract the best people.

"It's definitely a work hard, play hard model that (Camilla) and Matt have put together, but she's probably more of the 'quality of life' individual of the company," he said. "She cares from the minute that you show up to the next step of

introducing your family; she cares about all that across the board and it's a pleasure to work for someone that cares about you. In this day and age people don't have to be that way."

Kirsch Transportation, which was started in the owners' base-ments in Omaha and Atlanta, focuses on five primary modal services — dry van, refrigerated, open deck, diversified solutions and its most recent segment, intermodal. As the go-between connecting clients and trucking companies, the pressure to satisfy both ends of the equation is as delicate a balancing act as it is critical to growth.

"The customer and the carrier are both alike but also very different," Becker said. "If we can't find the best or the most successful carriers out there along with a good safety record or track record then we aren't doing our customers any

service. On the other end of the spectrum, we need to service our carriers and make them want

to call us back, make them want to look up Kirsch Transportation the next time they need freight to haul."

Kirsch Transportation Services

Phone: 877-341-9611

Address: 25 Main Place, Suite 300, Council Bluffs 51503

Service: Logistics company

Employees: 43

Website: www.kirschtrans.com

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