

## THE INS FAMILY OF COMPANIES



June 1, 2015

Des Moines Business Record  
c/o Jason Swanson  
100 4th Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Dear Mr. Swanson,

It is with honor and enthusiasm I am pleased to nominate Melissa Ness for the 2015 Women of Influence Award. Melissa's expertise, dedication, remarkable leadership and service to Merit Resources has elevated and guided the organization to achieve higher levels of growth while maximizing resources. Merit is Professional Employer Organization based in Des Moines, Iowa serving over 400 clients representing 15,000 employees nationwide with their Human Resource needs.

Melissa joined Merit Resources in 2007 and quickly assimilated to the PEO industry in her role as Controller. She has gained respect within the Merit organization through her demonstration of collaboration, expertise, and engagement among the Senior Management Team as well as staff.

Merit Resources embarked on an intensive year long process to obtain the Employer Services Assurance Corporation (ESAC) accreditation in 2009. Melissa led the organization's efforts to gain the ESAC accreditation, of which only 4% of PEOs in the nation have sought and obtained. In September 2009, Merit successfully met the requirements and continues to maintain this crucial accreditation annually.

Melissa's fortitude, financial expertise, and experience proved her readiness to assume a higher level of leadership and in 2012 enthusiastically accepted the role of Vice President, Finance for Merit Resources. In this role Melissa directs relationships with lending institutions, shareholders, and the financial community. She also oversees and directs treasury, budgeting, audit, tax, accounting, purchasing, real estate, long range forecasting, risk management, client transition, prospective and existing client pricing and underwriting, and Captive Insurance Company management for the Merit organization.

With the increasing needs and demands of technology for the Merit organization, Melissa accepted the opportunity to oversee this operational area. In 2013, Melissa was promoted to Vice President, Finance and Business Systems, the role she holds today.

Not only has Melissa devoted her time, energy, and talents to the financial and business operations of the organization, her dedication and commitment to her four managers and 14 staff has been critical in attracting and retaining top talent at Merit Resources. She is a graduate of the 2012 West Des Moines Leadership Academy. Her motivation, coaching, mentoring, and leadership style is well-respected and one in which we strive to replicate. Melissa goes the extra step to ensure her staff's feedback is valued and heard, that they receive the resources needed to perform their responsibilities, and ensures professional development opportunities are available.

Melissa's commitment to excellence also extends to the community. She is currently on the Board of Directors for the Clive Chamber of Commerce and the Des Moines Playhouse.

Melissa's dedicated efforts, achievement, and success in serving Merit Resources and her staff models the way for other individuals within Merit and those individuals employed the financial field who aspire to the next career level. It has been and continues to be an honor to have Melissa Ness at the forefront of our Merit organization.

Thank you for considering Melissa Ness for the 2015 Women of Influence award.

Regards



Joel Duncan, CEO  
Merit Resources