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ARAG®

400 Locust, Suite 480

Des Moines, Iowa 50309

800-888-4184

515-246-8710 fax

www.ARAGgroup.com

Business Record

The Depot at Fourth

100 Fourth Street

Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Dear Nomination Committee:

It is with great excitement that I nominate Sarah Noll Wilson, Talent and Development Business Partner at ARAG, for the Forty Under 40 award. Sarah joined ARAG in July 2012 and since then has left her fingerprints all over the organization. She has planted a lot of seeds on the importance of learning, development, measurement and how these things can truly take the organization to the next level. She is creative and pushes us all to think differently and do more to make the organization exceed its goals. It has been an absolute joy to work with Sarah and I’m proud of the amazing difference she has made in the organization.

Upon hire, Sarah began building relationships with all levels of the organization, spending time meeting with both management and team members and understanding what was working well and where there was opportunity for further resources in the learning and development area. From there, she created a plan to address learning and development needs throughout the organization over the course of several years and has been working her plan. Sarah has a very open, collaborative, easy going style that allows her to partner with our CEO and our Executive team on an organization-wide initiative, as well as a providing training to a Customer Care Specialist that is newly hired. She intently listens to her clients (ARAG team members) and asks specific questions to get to the heart of an issue.

Over the course of the last year and a half, one of her major accomplishments has been changing the perception of training and development. In a classroom setting, Sarah has transformed training from a speaker with a wordy PowerPoint presentation to a memorable and interactive learning experience. She has innovative ideas and isn’t afraid to try new ways of learning and developing. She is a continuous learner herself, constantly reading, attending conferences, participating in workshops, and striving to incorporate her learnings into her work regularly. A huge believer in a transfer of learning, she is helping our team members question what they want to get out of a learning experience before it happens and then work to apply it in their day to day life afterwards.

Here’s one example of the difference Sarah has made: She was brought on to help train team members on organization data retention efforts, but she quickly evolved to holding a key role in the creation of “Data Retention Champions” for each department. These champions helped keep departments on track, and had oversight of the development and implementation of a tracking and measurement tool. The tool helped keep Data Retention top of mind for team members and created some friendly competition among departments in meeting the goals, and celebrated team members that met their data retention goal. The project was so well done that our corporate headquarters in Germany recommended we submit it for a company award. This is a great testament to the work she put in on this and how well it was received by our local office as well as ARAG Germany. Overall, the data retention effort has been very successful. This project was not well-received in the past and many people across all levels dragged their feet; however, Sarah’s approach really solidified the importance of it and made it more reasonable and “tolerable” to get into compliance.

Our company has very ambitious goals to reach over the next several years. In order to meet those goals, we need to make changes in our culture and competencies. I consulted with Sarah on this initiative, and she recommended that we use Appreciative Inquiry to review our competencies. Sarah recommended a consultant from the International Leadership Association Annual conference in Montreal, and from there with the assistance of the consultant, we brainstormed a plan to define our culture and competencies that involves the entire organization. Sarah has been instrumental in getting this up and running and this will continue to be a major initiative in 2014. This is just yet another example of how Sarah is impacting the organization.

In her role, Sarah has developed and facilitated numerous training sessions and workshops throughout the organization. Whether she was partnering with Human Resources to develop management training, working with client management and sales to tell better stories and build better relationships with our clients, helping our IT and Operations areas provide training on Company-wide projects, or facilitating workshops to help a department to work together better and meet goals, Sarah works to provide impactful, meaningful development opportunities that make the organization grow stronger and more competitive. She is very passionate about her work, partnering with her clients to find high quality solutions that are based in research. She strives to create learning opportunities for our team members that they can not only apply to their jobs, but also in their personal life as well.

We are very fortunate to have a resource such as Sarah to help shape our company going forward!

Sincerely,

Lisa Wolf

Human Resources Director

ARAG