State and Federal Communications is Making it Happen in downtown Akron

State and Federal Communications is an expert in lobbying, political contribution and procurement lobbying compliance. They are a company unique and valued in the government affairs field with a strong commitment to helping clients comply with municipal, state, and federal laws and regulations.

"We're getting out into the community in a lot of different ways."
Joe May

State and Federal Communications celebrated 25 years in 2018 and is headquartered in downtown Akron with an office in Washington, DC. Downtown Akron Partnership and JLL sat down with Elizabeth Bartz, president and CEO, Joe May, manager, corporate social responsibility and Jonathan Spontarelli, digital media manager at Sweet Mary's Bakery to learn more about this unique company.

Tell us more about your business.

Elizabeth: State and Federal Communication is a national government affairs company. We keep track of state lobbying laws, campaign finance laws and procurement laws in all of the states, in about 300 cities, the federal government, Canada and most recently this year in the European Union countries. Our clients are large companies and trade associations, based in a number of states or countries, who need to know what the lobbying laws are because every state has a different law.

You started in Washington, DC, but made the choice to come to Akron. What drew you to this area?

Elizabeth: I grew up in Warren, Ohio; that was baby bear. Cleveland was papa bear and Akron was mama bear. I spent a lot of time in Akron since my uncle was the pastor at the Greek Orthodox Church. I lived in Alexandria, VA, before I moved here and Akron was twice as big. I thought, "I need bigger, but I don't need Papa bear. I need mama bear." And I love it. The cost of living, the rent and everything about running a business is much more affordable in Akron.

So, 25 years in do you still love being in Akron?

Elizabeth: I love being in Akron. I love it for its affordability and the people that we have here. In regards to the local colleges, we're proudly a two university partner. Many of us are graduates of Kent State University and we have a relationship with their political science department and school of journalism and mass communications. We also work with The University of Akron law school and hire many of its alums. We have a dozen attorneys on our staff that do the research for our website. There are a total of 40 people on our entire staff.

What's the culture like at State and Federal Communications?

Elizabeth: I don't think there is anybody that doesn't believe I'm all in. All I do is think about our company. We've always had a lot of rules and processes, but we work on our culture all the time.

Joe: Elizabeth has always encouraged us to be leaders here in Akron and within the company. We're getting out into the community in a lot of different ways. One of the things that I love is that Elizabeth has really created the space for good to happen. We are afforded the chance to get out and go to the non-profit of our choice and make a difference. I think gratitude is something I would talk about in our company culture. We feel it's a privilege to work in Akron and we want to give back in whatever ways we can.

It sounds like you encourage your employees to be engaged in the community

Elizabeth: I do. I think that getting involved in your community is very important. I think that's what helps build a community.

RETHINKING YOUR WORKPLACE STRATEGY

Part V

Creating the office of the future isn't just about incorporating the latest and greatest tech and amenities.

Employers need to manage their space effectively to induce productivity among employees, which is why more companies are opting for open office concepts and innovation zones. Breaking down barriers can also break down silos and encourage interoffice communication. But, these spaces need to be tried and tested in order for companies to harness their full power of enhancing collaboration across employees.

For more information on how you can transform your workplace strategy, email Warren Blazy III at Warren.Blazy@am.jll.com.

To read the full interview and learn more about State and Federal Communications, visit downtownakron.com

Photos by Tim Fitzwater.