

By Matt Ottinger

# Apparatus

## Talented People Building Technology, Relationships

Delivering information technology solutions is the name of the game at Indianapolis-based Apparatus. It achieves that mission, company leaders say, by putting a great emphasis on finding the right people to walk its hallways.

“Our belief is that people want to work with great people,” explains Aman Brar, company president. “Above all the perks and niceties that we have in the office, the number one critical ingredient is that if you believe you work with the best in the business, it makes it very hard to want to go somewhere else.”

Since its beginnings (the company was founded by CEO Kelly Pfladderer in 1999), Apparatus has grown to a staff size approaching 175 – all while rising to the occasion of giving the top minds in technology a workplace unlike many others.

“Our philosophy has always been that we want to enable a culture, rather than create a culture,” articulates Kelly Lavin, vice president of talent management. “We want to create space for people to bring their unique perspectives and talents, including what makes you a unique person, and help link you with other people with that interest area.”

She adds that the company uses Yammer – a private social network platform for internal use in businesses – to help staffers find others who share their passions.

“Whether it’s craft brewing or playing video games, there are a lot of people that work within these walls with awesome talents and interests, and we just try to create space for that,” Lavin offers.

### Gym dandy

One amenity that Apparatus employees enjoy is an on-site gymnasium – featuring a full basketball court. In addition to fulfilling their hoop dreams, the gym also allows workers to gather for free yoga, Pilates and other classes – or to provide a sanctuary from the office.

“Our conversations while playing H-O-R-S-E are vastly different than when we’re behind a computer or talking to customers,” relays Ryan Hahaj, business development manager. “You get a personal aspect and learn about people in a way you wouldn’t have (in a different venue).”

Fitness is a general theme at Apparatus – one that some argue defies the general perception of the average IT associate.

“You have your stereotypes of IT folks as being in the basement,

super nerdy, glasses up on the nose; that’s not the culture here,” clarifies Matt Vest, technology analyst. “We have a lot of active, athletic people, and we hang out a lot outside of work together. For example, this morning a couple of us ran to the Natatorium and swam.”

Staff also has access to electric-assisted bicycles, thus allowing them to venture the 14 city blocks to downtown proper without breaking too much of a sweat. Should they require it, however, there are locker rooms with showers at the facility.

And if employees become ill or need health guidance, Apparatus strives to take care of its team members.

“We also introduced a clinic that’s free to our employees,” Lavin says, noting the off-site facility is located very close to the office, and there is another location on the north side of the city. “You get a wellness coach for free – and if you’re sick, you can go in and get an antibiotic for free. It allows them to not worry about being sick or having to access medical care.”

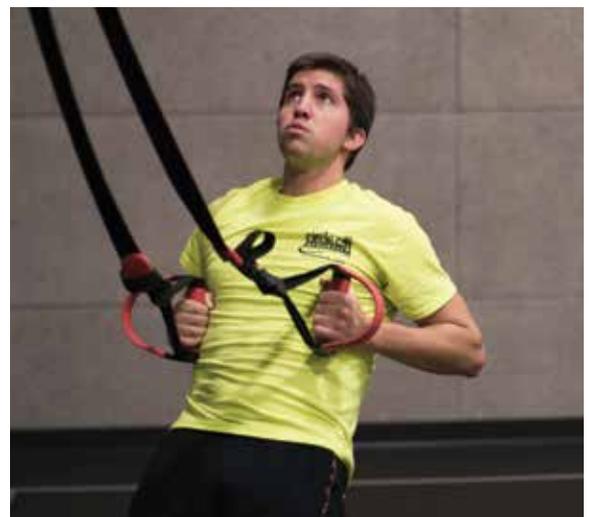
While Apparatus staffers are treated to Fitbits and other fitness tools and accessories – as well as catered, well-rounded, locally-sourced staff lunches on Mondays – wellness encompasses much more than physical health at the company.

“We have a branded wellness program called ‘Reboot,’” Lavin adds. “It’s not just about rebooting from a fitness perspective, but from a holistic perspective – reboot your finances, reboot your creativity.”

### People – the greatest benefit

Above all, Brar reiterates that it’s the people – not the things – that make Apparatus worthy of being on the Best Places to Work in Indiana list. Although maintaining such a high level of talent is a challenge, he admits, it’s one the company accepts and overcomes.

“Pulling that off is very challenging because you have to have an awesome talent and acquisition strategy and pull the kind of people you want. In our case, that’s brilliant people with enormous grit – two things tough to find in combination,” he concludes. “But that’s thousands of times more valuable than the lunch that we’re catering today, so you can never lose sight of that. It’s important to keep the focus on the people, not the coffee machine.”



Catered weekly lunches and activities in its on-site gymnasium allow Apparatus staff to come together in unconventional ways.