

# SECURING SUCCESS

## Allegion Thrives on Strong Values

By Katie Coffin



Von Duprin exit devices can be found in many locations – this one at Riley Hospital for Children. Von Duprin is a security hardware brand of Allegion PLC.

Allegion PLC's Hoosier identity dates back to the 1903 Iroquois Theatre Fire in Chicago that killed nearly 600 people.

The building's exterior doors prohibited non-paying persons from entering, but also prevented patrons from exiting due to locks with no means of egress. As the fire roared, there were few means of escape.

Carl Prinzler, who was a manager at the Vonnegut Hardware Company in Indianapolis, was supposed to attend the show that night but didn't make it. Haunted by the tragedy, he partnered with Henry DuPont to develop the first "panic bar" style egress device, enabling people to exit from a door that is locked on the outside.

It was marketed in 1908 under the name "Von Duprin" – a contraction of the names Vonnegut, DuPont and Prinzler. Today, Von Duprin security hardware is a brand of Allegion with a manufacturing facility on the east side of Indianapolis.

These roots are a source of pride for chairman, president and CEO Dave Petratis

and staff at Allegion's North American headquarters in Carmel. Its heritage, along with centrality and a strong pool of local talent, is why Indiana remains home.

"I've been in 50 countries in the world. I've been in 49 of 50 states," describes Petratis. "The Midwest work ethic and the Midwest drive to satisfy customers, in my mind, is a compelling advantage when you think about Indiana."

### Key(less) to the future

Allegion became publicly traded in December 2013 after spinning off from Ingersoll Rand Security Technologies. Today, Allegion is a \$2 billion company – with 25-plus brands sold in 130 countries – focusing on security around the door and adjacent areas. Allegion employs nearly 8,500 people worldwide, including 1,200 in Indiana.

Allegion is a pioneer in the Internet of Things (the network of connected devices) and the "Keyless Era." But in a nod to the past, inside the doors to the Carmel headquarters is a lock museum. The display features security artifacts spanning centuries, from Renaissance-era locks to the Eureka lock patented in 1982 boasting 1,073,741,824 (that's more than one trillion) combinations. Visitors can also see the key to the third Bertaudiere tower at Bastille that imprisoned the Man in the Iron Mask.

Fast forward to today: For residential

security Allegion saw 70% connected-home lock revenue growth in the first half of the year, and is projecting a total of one million e-locks sold for 2015.

Recently there has been a heightened nationwide focus on school security. Last summer, Allegion was awarded its first "Leadership Team of the Year" honor from the Security Industry Association for its role on the issue of safer schools. There are security options available now that, with the push of a button, can lock down a school in a matter of seconds.

"There's an electromechanical convergence going on in our global industry that's quite exciting," Petratis adds. "A lock system, an exit device, a closer that are core elements of our business are becoming more intelligent and keyless. Your cell phone will be a driver of your identity and access into a building. There are one billion locks in the world. If 30% of those become intelligent, it's an outstanding business opportunity for Allegion."

### 'Simple, yet powerful'

Like its technology, Allegion's culture continues to develop with a strong set of values at the forefront. Mairin Priestley, HR business partner, emphasizes that these principles are not pie-in-the-sky words; they are actionable for every employee. They include (among others):

- Serve others, not yourself
- Be curious beyond the obvious
- Be empowered and accountable
- This is your business, run with it

"If I'm an employee on the manufacturing floor and something is wrong with the quality that's coming out or something doesn't seem right, I'm empowered to shut down that line and I'm accountable to communicate what's not happening and to give suggestions about how we can make a change," Priestley explains. "It's the right thing to do, which is another one of our values. Every single employee can live those (values), and we expect every single employee to do that. And they really do."

Priestley previously worked for Ingersoll Rand out of North Carolina, and she was part of the team that worked on the spinoff transition from the HR side. She says moving to Indiana was a "no-brainer" after considering the leadership team, employee base and quality of the products.

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“What’s best for the company is what’s best for every team and what’s best for employees is what’s best for the company,” Priestley states. “And I think for me that’s been the best part of coming here (to Allegion). I feel valued every day. I feel like I make a contribution every day.”

Maria Pia Tamburri, director of public affairs, reaffirms that Allegion locations across the globe are driven by these values and serving others. In Italy, employees partnered with local schools to make the buildings more secure. In India, they worked with a local orphanage. In China, a group provided haircuts for the elderly.

“If there’s a way to define our values, it’s that they are simple but incredibly powerful,” Tamburri summarizes. “As a company, I think what’s really unique is you have all these different teams locally very engaged in their communities and living the values every day.”

### Part of the community

Allegion’s values foster a sense of community where people can get involved, and a priority is placed on servant leadership.

Employee committees at Allegion are based on individual passions. There are committees that concentrate on community service, health and wellness, fun and even green initiatives (that group calls themselves the “Trash Talkers”).

Priestley helps organize the GIVE Community Service employee group, which follows up Allegion’s charitable donations with actions. Each year, Allegion sponsors a Habitat for Humanity house in the Greater Indianapolis area. GIVE helps coordinate more than 200 volunteers to work on-site during the build.

Last year, Allegion donated to the Julian Center and GIVE coordinated a back-to-school supply drive, collecting more than \$1,000 worth of materials. The company also organized and hosted a carnival for kids living at the shelter. This summer, GIVE conducted a LEGO® drive for Team JOEY through the Heroes Foundation, a program to further



More than 200 Allegion employees participated in a Habitat for Humanity build earlier this year. Team members also volunteered their time with the Julian Center and the Monon Community Center, among other places.

the battle against pediatric cancer.

“A lot of what we do isn’t about the money,” Priestley says about GIVE. “It’s about the going out and doing.”

Allegion also seeks out employees’ strengths and passions as they relate to their jobs to ensure each person is in a position to succeed.

“The opportunities here for someone who’s willing to work hard and be a part of the team are fabulous because we really do work as an organization,” Priestley remarks. “It’s very much (the notion that) you are here for a reason, we recruited you and hired you for your specific skillset, and we want you to be successful and we’re going to help you be successful. We all have a common goal. We all have a desire to succeed as a business, to make a difference in our world. And we work hard every day to do that ...”

Laughter erupts from a retirement party down the hall.

“... Not at the expense of having fun,” Priestley concludes with a smile.

**RESOURCES:** Dave Petratis, Maria Pia Tamburri and Mairin Priestley, Allegion PLC, at [www.allegion.com](http://www.allegion.com)