

“We couldn’t scale without them”: The benefits of a full-service HR partner

Here’s why this entrepreneur would never again start and grow a business without a full-service HR solution

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

31-49

LOCATION

Charlotte, NC

INDUSTRY

Retail and wholesale trade

CLIENT SINCE

2014

SERVICES USED

- Full-service HR/PEO
- Payroll and employment administration
- Employee benefits
- Talent management

The InStore Group (ISG) is a technology-driven nationwide retail service organization based in Charlotte, N.C. They have a saying, “Nothing sells from the backroom,” to motivate their merchandising vendors who keep shelves stocked in 20,000-40,000 retail locations each month.

The company also provides retail consulting services, store-by-store intelligence reports, online data visualization to enhance daily reporting experiences and more, to some of the country’s top retailers and consumer packaged-goods companies. To service so many clients, ISG relies on a network of 6,900 vendors.

Tom Palombo, ISG founder and CEO, says managing his business would be impossible to do alone. Since 2015, he has used Insperty’s full-service Workforce Optimization® HR solution designed to help small and midsize businesses scale.

In 2020, a triple-digit growth rate earned ISG a spot on the Inc. 5000, an accomplishment Palombo attributes to a stellar team, technology, flawless execution and the decision to enlist Insperty as an HR partner.

It was Insperty that recognized ISG's rapid growth and nominated it for the Inc. 5000. "InStore would never have been noticed for how fast we were growing if it wasn't for Insperty nominating us to Inc. magazine," said Palombo.

A COST-EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO A FULL-TIME HR DEPARTMENT

Palombo is a serial entrepreneur. He says he wouldn't start a business again without the support of a company like Insperty. "They've allowed us to scale much faster than we could have internally," he says.

When Palombo contacted Insperty in 2015, he was handling HR and employee payroll himself and struggling to keep up with relevant HR-related laws and regulations for his employees.

"The complexity of compliance and staying current with federal and state employment laws and regulations became overwhelming," he explains, adding that a mistake in any of these areas "will cost you dearly."

He says outsourcing to an experienced HR company is more cost-effective than trying to build a full-time, "non-revenue generating" HR department. "It is also more effective and allows you to focus on your core competencies.

"When you are the owner, you can't do it all. You think you can, but you need to focus on what your expertise is," he explains.

"We could never handle our daily business without Insperty handling the payroll for our employees and paying them by ACH. Think about how many employee payroll checks we don't have to write and I don't have to sign anymore."

SECURING AN EXCEPTIONAL TEAM TO DELIVER AN EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

ISG has another saying, "It is not what we do, it's how we do it." Providing exceptional service is part of ISG's unique value, making recruitment strategy especially important. In addition to competitive pay, competitive benefits are key to attracting talent, Palombo says. Insperty provides ISG employees access to competitive benefits, "employee career enhancement" programs, even shopping discounts and deals at popular retailers.

"Without Insperty, our employees would not have access to the competitive employee offering that the employees have today," Palombo says. Insperty helps ISG take better care of its employees.

HR processes are turnkey, with templates provided for tasks from managing vacation time to promotions and disciplinary issues. The support goes beyond forms, however. Insperty regularly counsels Palombo on HR best practices for handling employee issues.

"When we're having an employee conversation about performance, they [Insperty] are on the phone with us. I would never do it (discuss an issue with an employee) without them."

It is more than a vendor/supplier relationship – it is a true partnership, he says, noting that any company can handle payroll, but "you need to find a partner like Insperty that comes alongside you to help grow the business with you."

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