

Comp Laude® Award: Employer

Bill Wainscott

International Paper

Responsible for overseeing workers' compensation and occupational health at International Paper, Bill Wainscott was an early proponent of employee advocacy and has become a powerful voice for the injured worker. Bill does not just talk about changing the conversation around workers' compensation, he makes it happen. Bill's influence and commitment to change do not stop inside the corporate walls. In what was historically a very contentious and uncertain system, Bill has been successful in conveying the need to humanize the process.

His philosophy of "No dead ends" transcends the company and characterizes his tenacious commitment to supporting injured workers and ensuring they understand the process and benefits available to them. Bill intuitively recognized that each employee's situation was unique and felt that it was vitally important that individuals be guided throughout the process so they could access all benefits to which they were entitled whether through workers' compensation, short-term disability, or an employee assistance program.

Employee advocacy has become Bill's professional signature. He is driving conversation when it comes to caring for injured workers beginning with the vernacular encompassing this own program. Just as he changed his title from workers' compensation manager to manager, occupational health & occupational care and recovery, Bill changed the names of his own team members from regional workers' compensation coordinators to regional recovery coordinators. Additionally, claims examiners were renamed to care and recovery specialists.

Crediting International Paper, he says, "I learned lessons from executives in the company. I learned care and compassion. Those are the kind of folks who influenced our program and really got us to the point we're at."

His dedication to the field and passion is evident. When asked what advice he would give to others coming into the industry he offered, "It's not about what you do - it's why you do it. And we lose sight of the "why." We come to be all about the procedures, all about the process [...] and when you focus on the "why," it all comes together."

