

PASSION FOR LEARNING LEADS TO COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAM AND NEW CAREERS AT SECURITY FIRST

From early on in her career, when she was working two jobs and going to school, it was clear that Belkys (pronounced – Bell-Keys) Stallings was destined to be in a training role. She started out at UPS as a part-time employee and eventually became a full-time training manager. Belkys transitioned and accepted a role at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary where she built her first training team from the ground up. She also served as Training Manager of the Boston Call Center for Viking River Cruises, where her two passions – training and travel – collided. She entered the insurance sector in 2014 and lead several employee development programs for MAPFRE.

Belkys was recruited by MAPFRE – A global Insurance Company based out of Madrid – and she seized the opportunity. At MAPFRE, she was a performance consultant. She would meet with executives to discuss their intentions as well as department goals, and then figure out how best to make those targets a reality. “One of the most important things I have learned in my career is to listen. I find that the more I listen, the more successful I become. As I progressed through my career, I found that it’s not about my objectives – it’s about helping people achieve their goals,” Belkys explains.

After MAPFRE, Belkys gave up the blustery winters and city life of Boston and headed to the tropics of Florida to be closer to family. She was quickly hired by Security First Insurance Company, the second-largest homeowners insurance company in Florida. Her mission was to build a training team, identify learning technology, and develop blended training programs that supported business goals and organizational change. For the first time, Belkys found herself in a position with autonomy and the creative freedom to build programs that are tailored to the learner and business objectives, “Security First is very spe-



Belkys Stallings

cial,” Belkys explains with fondness. “I am considered a subject matter expert and given autonomy. I am able to directly discuss my ideas with the leaders at Security First. It’s possible here and it’s not like that everywhere. They all have the same goal in mind at Security First and that is to help the customer. Insurance isn’t ‘glamorous’ but it really comes down to the people at Security First. Good people, like-minded people who want to help.”

Her colleagues would say that Belkys’ strengths are her love of learning and her ability to get colleagues, from executives to newly hired entry-level employees, excited about training. “Belkys is highly skilled with an intrinsic ability to quickly understand the big picture and align training



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needs with business strategy,” said Marissa Buckley, Vice President of Marketing and Brand Experience at Security First Insurance. “She not only listens but asks questions that ensure the business accurately identifies needs and understands desired outcomes from the start, which are essential to developing highly effective, cost-efficient training programs,” she continued.

Her latest project at Security First was to create a training program for employees interested in exploring other career opportunities within the

company. Belkys started by creating the “90-Day Claims Examiner Trainee Program” which had an inaugural class with 15 internal employees. The program successfully transitioned employees into claims examination positions. The 90-days are structured around instructor-led training, action, and web-based learning. The program starts with a five-day bootcamp style training given by Jim Robert from BestFoot4ward. During this time, the students learn about the industry standards for claims examination. After the foundation is laid, they delve into how Security First examines and adjusts claims. During this time, the participants acquire their 6-20 Claims Adjuster License and Xactimate level 1, IICRC Water Mitigation, and ILX construction certifications. They learn about the full claim process from first notice of loss to settlement and receive specialized training to help them understand damage reports and interpret policy language.

The program grew and three groups of employees have now successfully completed the 90-day training program. Due to employee feedback and the value the program has delivered, the company saw a need to extend the program to existing claims employees and new employees with no insurance background. Belkys and her team used the 90-day training program as a baseline and tailored it to create a shorter bootcamp refresher program for seasoned professionals and a longer 120-



Belkys and her husband, Roosevelt

day program for new recruits with no insurance background. The 120-Day program is a comprehensive curriculum that trains to the knowledge, skills, and abilities which encompass a Claims Examiner’s job duties and tasks. It is targeted to recent college graduates. The participants are given a Student Manual as well as numerous handouts and materials throughout the program to supplement the instructional content, creating a comprehensive resource once on the job.

Belkys is proud of this accomplish-

ment, “I have created other training programs, but this one is the most exciting – the evolution of it. We started by taking care of people within our company and now it’s growing into hiring entry-level people and creating enriching, long-term careers that benefit the local community. These new trainees have the opportunity to have a very successful career at Security First Insurance by going through our program.”

In addition to the 90-Day and 120-Day programs, Belkys also brought in International Insurance Institute to provide customer service training for the Security First Claims Department. Only days after getting married, she attended the 2019 Claims Education Conference in New Orleans last May. After attending some of the sessions at the conference, Belkys felt that the type of training that International Insurance Institute offered was in line with her vision for Security First by making customer satisfaction a top priority.

As if working on these training programs and adjusting to life as a newlywed wasn’t enough, Belkys is currently pursuing her doctorate in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. She couldn’t do it without the support of those she loves around her, “My dad is my number one hero,” she says. “He taught me, by example, that to be successful it takes a lot of hard work and not giving up on yourself or others.” Now, that’s advice from which we can all benefit. ■