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Spotlight Long Island

OneGroup exec on what makes this one organization unique, its mission, and more

For more than 100 years, OneGroup has been providing insurance for New York families and businesses, starting upstate in Oneida before expanding to other regions including Nassau County and Forest Hills, Queens.

Along with that geographic expansion has come an expansion of its services over the years to include risk management and business solutions. To better reflect the rapidly growing portfolio of services, the firm's nonbanking companies were combined under the name OneGroup in 2014, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing independent insurance brokers and risk management companies.

In December 2015, Community Bank, N.A. purchased Oneida Financial Corp. (ONFC) including OneGroup, expanding its list of complementary services to include wealth management, benefit administration, actuarial and pension services, retirement plan services and trust services. Now, OneGroup employs more than 200 experts and specialists across 70 areas of risk management, insurance, human resources (HR) and employee benefits in 19 locations. In addition to New York and Pennsylvania in the northern U.S., its geographic footprint also includes South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. Its executive offices and technology hub are located at OneGroup Center in Syracuse, New York.

We recently interviewed Josephine Bottitta, OneGroup senior vice president and business risk specialist, who's based out of the firm's Malverne office on Long Island.

Q: What makes your organization special/unique in your opinion?

A: OneGroup has a unique, proactive and team-based approach to risk management, insurance, and

benefits, HR and other business services. We partner with our clients and truly work for what's best for them. We openly share our knowledge so we can make a real difference for their businesses, find actionable, proactive solutions and optimize their performance. We also blend a local focus with our more global focus. I've lived on Long Island essentially my whole life. I love Long Island's uniqueness and beauty and recognize its challenges. It's expensive to live here and oftentimes competes with NYC for economic sustainability and growth. OneGroup has supported me and Long Island all the way, which is fully consistent with its mission to support our clients and community.



Josephine Bottitta, OneGroup senior vice president and business risk specialist

Q: What is your organization's mission?

A: OneGroup's mission is to create one company, working as one team, with one focus, and one mission: to serve each client as our one client.

Q: What role does technology play in accomplishing that mission?

A: OneGroup is on the cutting edge of industry technology. We don't just keep track of what's happening in the insurance world, we actively make our own waves. Some of our most popular products are technology based, including OneLink, our HR/employee benefits automating software, and the OneGroup Risk Management Center, our online portal for documents, trainings, data tracking and more.

Q: Can you tell me a bit about your job?

A: My favorite part of my profession is engaging with my clients. I love being able to learn about their organizations and then help them with the issues that keep them up at night. I have a lot of experience in several different yet relevant fields that I can call upon to help my clients explore innovative solutions.

Q: What was it that attracted you to the work you do?

A: Like most of my peers, my career has encompassed a multitude of roles. I have been a child abuse social worker, general practice attorney, and human resources director, to name just a few. All of these gave me a wealth of experience that I enjoy sharing with my clients.

Q: What is the biggest challenge of your job?

A: We've found that no matter what industry our clients are in, there will always be consolidation, growing expenses with reduced revenue, and a need to be efficient and save money. OneGroup lends support and resources to not only find the best price and coverage insurance options but also finds innovative ways to deal with each issue in these challenging times. We believe an insurance broker should be more than transactional in selling an insurance product. We commit the time, effort and resources to engage and build a longstanding relationship with our clients. At OneGroup, you see us more than once a year for renewal.

Q: What new initiatives are your organization implementing?

A: OneGroup continually reviews new technologies that will provide clients with more insight, more time to focus on their businesses and potentially lower their costs. When a client faces a unique business problem, OneGroup does not rely on off-the-shelf solutions. For example, one client in New York was watching workers' compensation premiums spiral out of control largely from new hires into the furniture delivery business. OneGroup created EmploySmart, a defensible program to help clients avoid hiring someone else's workers' comp claims. Similar to EmploySmart, OneGroup is again taking the lead on risk management by providing testing and solutions to workplace indoor air pollution that is now known to cause a wide range of illnesses and affects companies' profitability.



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