



Tracy L. Schrey

Winter Garden, Florida



Valens Business Services, LLC

[Personal LinkedIn Profile](#)

Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Tracy L. Schrey:

Originally from Central Pennsylvania, Tracy Schrey, Owner of Valens Business Services, LLC, spent over 30 years in corporate America before launching her own business in January 2020. Schrey shared the story behind her journey – starting in 1988 – and how, after three decades of conforming to cultures and feeling restrained by upper-management, she’s finally free to deploy her own employee-centric approach to Human Resources.

“After high school, I worked as a Bookkeeper for a local bank while pursuing an Associate of Arts in Paralegal Studies,” Schrey said. “Even though I didn’t have my Paralegal Certificate, I responded to an ad for a Paralegal position with Rite Aid and, after being stood up for the interview and then waiting around for three hours to speak with

someone, I got the job. I spent 15 years with Rite Aid, earned my law degree, passed the bar exam and gained valuable experience handling employee relations, administrative claims, subpoenas, grievances, employment-related litigation and other matters. By June 2003, I felt like I was 'at the end of the tunnel' with Rite Aid. It was time to look for new opportunities.”

Schrey spent the next 12 and a half years with Penske Truck Leasing & Penske Logistics as the company's Associate General Counsel, Employment and Labor Law, and Company Ethics/Integrity Ombudsman. Among many other things, she managed global HR and Compliance for 28,000 decentralized union and non-union employees, including oversight of Risk Mitigation, Employment Claims/Litigation, Audits, Subpoenas, and Penske's Ethics and Diversity programs. When the position was eliminated, Schrey spent nine months helping a friend with a real estate title and closing business before getting a call from a recruiter about an HR position requiring union expertise.

“The opportunity was a Senior Leadership position in Human Resources, Labor Relations and Public Records with the Reedy Creek Improvement District,” Schrey said. “I said yes and moved to Florida in 2016. Among other things, they brought me onboard to help negotiate a contract with the union representing their emergency responders. I successfully negotiated a \$2.4M savings in compensation costs and repaired a troubled 30-year relationship between Administration and the District's Union membership – who comprise approximately two thirds of the workforce.”

Schrey continued, “After 18 months, I left and took a position with EXL

Technology Services – a multinational operations management and analytics company with a business unit in Tampa in the medical claims administration space. After a year and a half, EXL decided to close the claims unit. I decided, at that point in time, I was ready to do what I've wanted to do for over 30 years.”

In January 2020, Schrey officially launched Valens Business Services – a business dedicated to guiding other businesses in cultivating a worker-inspired culture that attracts and mentors quality talent; thereby reducing attrition and operational costs, and increasing loyalty and respect for the brand. For Schrey, starting her own business has been an extremely rewarding situation and one that has given her an opportunity to focus on the ‘human’ aspect of HR.

“Being on my own has been very liberating,” she said. “For over 30 years, I always felt restrained to the confines of what upper management believed I should be doing and how I should be thinking. I had to conform to the culture of the company that was writing my paycheck, whether I was buying into it or not. For 30 years I've been looked down on to some degree because I do have a very employee-centric approach and philosophy to everything.”

Schrey continued, “Today, the HR environment is all about compassion, empathy and the ‘human’ aspect of HR. I've been doing that for 30 years.

I treat people the way I want to be treated. I'm very transparent. I'm approachable and can earn someone's respect and confidence in my abilities because I follow through on what I say I'm going to do.”

As Schrey shared, when it comes to additional services, beyond just cultivating a worker-inspired culture, she's also focused on offering a

slew of services designed to free-up management's time and capacity and to minimize the overall legal risk of the organizations she works with.

"We help our clients do this by: Drafting clear & practical Employee Handbooks, including policies and procedures; Ensuring fair & consistent employee discipline/performance management; Promoting communication with your workforce; Enabling cost-effective handling of administrative tasks (D&I and Compliance Training, Compensation Benchmarking, Conducting Neutral Investigations); and showing how easy it is – mostly without having to spend a dime – for genuine interest in your workforce and their families to flow from the top down."

Schrey continued, "We are an 'ASO' (Administrative Services Organization), allowing you to maintain full control of your employees while still having all of the advantages of outsourcing administrative tasks and only paying for the services you actually need – when you need them. Everyone requires assistance from time to time. Having Valens familiar with what you do and equipped to handle questions and situations as needed, or to step in if your employee is on PTO or an extended leave of absence, allows for continuity of services to your organization and its people and ensures a compliant, fair, and supportive work environment and culture."

Not long after launching, Schrey increased her target market from small to mid-size businesses. She identified that these companies often face high levels of risk, but many still lack the internal resources to mitigate such risk. After settling on a target demographic, Schrey hired a business coach to help her identify a specific niche within that

demographic to focus on.

“Together, we put together a marketing strategy that combined my background in transportation, logistics, warehouse distribution, and supply chain management with my legal experience dealing with issues related to distribution and commercial truck drivers. As Schrey shared, understanding certain do’s and don’ts is crucial for these types of companies.

“Many of these smaller and new trucking companies can be bankrupted by even one lawsuit,” she said. “Even if there’s no merit to the lawsuit, you’ll have to pay costly attorney fees. These companies need to position themselves to defend a lawsuit. That’s where I come in.”

To compete against larger companies, Schrey takes the time to understand culture, structure, expectations and management to be able to make specific recommendations and give certain advice. She also offers a complimentary compliance review to better understand the company and its structure and to identify any coverage gaps. She looks at documents, how employees are paid, if a CPA is used and whether or not local, state and federal employee requirements are met.

“We are all savvy, well-educated, globally-experienced former business leaders,” Schrey said. “We listen. We take the time to understand what your business needs. We learn everything we can about your business, its culture and people. We understand our clients need practical and legally-compliant approaches to any situation. We Perform at an Exceptional Level. Our services are custom-tailored and performed by the most responsive, accomplished, and personable professionals you will ever meet. We deliver quality advice and results, without big words

and complicated processes and within budget. We are the Smart Choice: unbiased, dependable and affordable.”

Looking ahead, Schrey is focused on growing her business by organizing her revenue-generating services into three levels of monthly consulting memberships that are tailored and priced for every company’s HR-needs budget.

“The basic Silver Membership, GrowMyBIZ, is \$99/month; the Gold HR Expert Access Membership is \$350/month (and includes everything in GrowMyBIZ plus an additional 2 hours/month of 1:1 HR Consulting support); and the Platinum HR Expert Access Membership is \$900/month (and includes everything in GrowMyBIZ plus an additional 6 hours/month of 1:1 HR Consulting support). By the end of 2020, my goal is to have at least 20 businesses registered for GrowMyBIZ; 10 businesses registered for the Gold Membership; and 5 businesses registered for the Platinum Membership.”

Schrey added, “Growing businesses also secure a free Legal Compliance Evaluation (a \$750.00 value), along with access to a repository of useful tools to assist with common employment-related issues. These Memberships also provide the opportunity to participate in monthly Video chats and have questions answered by a qualified HR expert through a Private Facebook group.”

Schrey is also growing her business by writing articles that showcase her passion and expertise. She wrote an article about Remote Inclusiveness and what employers can do to remain engaged. A follow-up to that article will focus on safety in the workplace. As part of that effort, she’s partnering with the Department of Homeland Security and

local law enforcement to ensure employers are prepared for a possible rise in workplace violence as result of COVID-19-related layoffs and the likely return to work of fewer employees, many of who may not be expecting to be permanently separated.

Another passion Schrey is pursuing, as a way to shed light on an important cause and ultimately generate more revenue for her business, is attempting to create more opportunities for women in trucking.

“Going back to my time in the transportation & logistics industries, it’s always been disconcerting to me the incredibly low percentage of women who hold CDL trucking positions,” she said. “Upper management always threw up their hands not knowing how to get ahead of the curve and be the front runner in supporting more women in trucking. I now have an opportunity to try and do something about it. To that end, I’m working on an article about female truck drivers. I want to use this article to show other employers that, from a diversity and inclusion perspective, it’s a great time to get out in front of the workforce.”

What advice does Schrey have for aspiring entrepreneurs? “As I am still in the launch phase myself, one of the best things I have done so far is to hire a Business Coach,” she said. “I am incredibly savvy, but having always worked for a corporation, I’ve never had to ‘sell’ my services or pull together a marketing strategy, among other things. Don’t be afraid to ask the right people for help. Otherwise, you’ll spin your wheels and waste time, energy, and money unnecessarily.”

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