

# practice profile

## Time to get physical

Indiana's DOZ keeps its staff moving

BY TAMIKA CODY



Dauby O'Connor & Zaleski's Ted Zaleski (left) and Katie Bailey

### AT A GLANCE

**Firm**

Dauby O'Connor & Zaleski

**Headquarters**

Carmel, Ind.

**Managing partners**

Steve Dauby and Sean O'Connor

**No. of partners/staff**

9/150

**Year founded**

1987

**Services**

Accounting, auditing,  
tax, consulting

**Industry specialties**

Affordable housing,  
not-for-profit,  
long-term care

**Dauby O'Connor & Zaleski has made health and wellness an essential focus for its staff.** The Carmel, Ind.-based firm took notice of the rising cost of health care and wanted to make sure that its employees were physically fit. So it incorporated a fitness center and an exercise program into the mix.

Several years ago, DOZ moved from a small office space that was outfitted with an exercise room, into a 30,000-square-foot space. The team made sure to include a sizable gym in its new location. "When we moved into

this building, we made a larger fitness room with much more equipment," shared DOZ co-founder Ted Zaleski. "People are in there from late afternoon into the evening almost all year, especially during the busy time of the year." The gym is furnished with elliptical machines, treadmills, stationary bicycles, stair steps, free weights and weight machines.

DOZ's gym doesn't require a membership and it's not located in the lobby or the main entrance to the building of the firm like most gyms. The fitness center is directly inside of

the firm's offices, which is a great perk to show off to potential hires. "When we bring recruits in, we make sure that they see [the gym], because it is, for some people, what may weigh the difference if they take an offer here or someplace else," said Zaleski.

**HEALTHY COMPETITION**

To encourage the staff to take advantage of the free fitness center, the firm put a competitive spin on things by adding an exercise

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## Physical

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tracking program. Gymgoers are outfitted with a wearable health tracking monitor, MOVable, which comes with software that lets them measure their progress once they sync it to their computers.

The device is worn on the wrist, just like a watch, and it tracks every step, moves and miles. “You can insert [MOVable] into your computer and it gives you a report on how much you’ve been moving,” said DOZ audit manager Katie Bailey, who joined the firm’s wellness committee in the summer of 2013. “When we started doing the online research, we wanted more than just a speedometer. When we found the Ohio-based company we did a trial run and rolled it out to the entire firm in December 2013.”

“With the MOVable bands, people really did start moving a lot,” noted Zaleski. “One of the girls in the tax department decided that she wanted to lose some weight, and when she started to use the MOVable band she really went into high gear, and wound up losing 63 pounds.”

“This gave people the incentive to get up,” he explained. “We occupy three floors for our office and some people who are on the second floor will walk up to the third floor and walk down to the stairs to the first floor just to get to the kitchen and rack up extra [movement] in the process. We try to get people to

included activity monitors and heart watches. “All we want to do is inspire movement,” said Squires. “We have an epidemic and the problem is that inactivity affects 80 percent of the workforce, from factory workers and software developers to the executive level.”

The accounting profession is also part of that inactive 80 percent workforce. “We really cut across all industry developers and industry types. And we look for those businesses where leadership has made wellness a priority,” Squires shared.

“General stats show that the average employer spends \$8,800 for their health plan,” explained Squires. “The data also shows that 15 percent of that \$8,800 is directly attributed to inactivity. This factors out to about \$1,400 per year for each employee who sits behind a desk and does not move ... this attributes to a company’s bottom line.”

DOZ’s bottom line for keeping its staff in shape doesn’t come with any discounts on its health benefits. “The health insurance company that we have now is really pushing the wellness aspect,” said Zaleski. “As part of the policy, everyone has to get their blood drawn and see what kind of shape they are in. If a member of the staff wants to talk to someone through the health insurance company about their particular situation and what they can do to get healthier, they have that option.”

### HEALTHY REWARDS

DOZ has approximately 150 employees, and

miles. Every week the moves were tallied and whoever met their set goals would be rewarded with a gift card or other types of incentives. “If you met at least three goals, that person would get four hours of paid time off,” said Bailey. “People get really competitive. They say, ‘I’m going to be in the top 10.’ And people who didn’t really do a lot started doing more than they had just so that they can get those four hours of paid time off at the end of the challenge.”

“For example, in the tax department, we’ve got people who aren’t necessarily that interested in exercise or anything, but once they heard of this four hours of paid time off, they got interested,” explained Zaleski. “Some of them may not have done much in the first two weeks but some of them got interested enough to do a lot in the last two weeks. The four hours itself got a lot of people moving and that was the intent ... to get people moving and not just sitting around all the time.”

Even though there are enticing incentives to get DOZ’s staff moving, not everyone hits the gym. “I can probably say that some people are too embarrassed to use it because they don’t know what they should be doing in there. We don’t have a trainer to come in and explain the equipment. But the people in the office that do use the gym, they can explain it to them,” said Zaleski.

### HEALTHY RESULTS

Since starting the program, the firm has seen

sleeping better, reduces their stress, and feels better about themselves, and they are eating better, you have a better performer. They are more alert and they have a better job rating.”

Bailey noticed a change around the office. “You can tell that the morale has increased,” she said. Having the fitness program incorporated into the firm’s model is also a way to keep the employees happy, she added: “It’s kind of like a retention policy in the firm. It makes them feel that they are wanted here and that they are needed here. In general, when you work in the accounting profession you’re at your desk for long hours, so it’s always good to get people motivated to move around.”

During the busy season, Zaleski said that he works out at least three days a week and he tries not to sit behind his desk for more than an hour: “I did notice people working out in the fitness center more this year than before. And I have also seen some people working out who I never saw in the fitness center before.”

### HEALTH TIPS

For firms that are ready to put their staff’s health on a pedestal, Bailey said that it’s important to put the staff front and center: “If you’re going to roll it out, you have got to make the employees feel that it is about them and that they are looking out for them and their families. It’s not just about the physical side; it’s also about stress management, financial management and budgeting.”



stop using the elevator and use the stairs instead. During January through April 15, everyone is so busy trying to get work done they are not even thinking about [exercising].”

The MOVable device has been on the market for about two and half years and was founded by Blake Squires and his wife, Michelle. It was Squires’s wife who advised that it was time to “do something about this obesity epidemic.”

Squires, who is a software product entrepreneur, started the development phase of MOVable in 2009. This is when he noticed the emerging trend of wearable products, which

during the busy tax season the gym can get a little crowded. A good portion of the staff, about a third, wants to log those moves and get up from their desks. “The afternoon and evening hours you have to sign up to use the fitness center,” explained Zaleski, who is also DOZ’s No.1 mover.

DOZ keeps the emerging health aficionados’ spirits up by giving the staff rewards if they exceed their set goals. When the firm started using the MOVable bands in January, one of the goals was to get at least 80 miles of movement logged in a certain amount of time. By March, the goal increased to 100

improvement in employee performance and productivity. “Data shows that a more active employee is a better performer,” said Squires. “With our program, the ultimate goal is to get a population to move about five miles a day. It’s the 10,000 steps that everybody hears about ... that’s five miles a day. When an individual moves at least five miles a day, it has been proven that stress is reduced; people eat better because they are more aware of intake and output, and they are sleeping better. Depending on how they are eating, they are either maintaining or reducing their waist line,” he said. “When you have an employee who is

Zaleski said that the firm didn’t plan on having a fitness center: “It just kind of happened.” He suggested that if someone is thinking about incorporating a gym within their own firm, it’s ideal to talk to the partners to see if they’d be interested. “We are certainly not the only firm that has a fitness center. I can’t believe that we are the only ones.” AT

*Is your firm equipped with a fitness center? How do you keep your staff moving? Drop us an e-mail at [AcToday@SourceMedia.com](mailto:AcToday@SourceMedia.com), or leave comments on our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/AccountingToday](http://www.facebook.com/AccountingToday).*