

**Recruiting and Staffing Consultants for IT, Engineering, Manufacturing, Clerical, Call Center and Legal Professionals and Managed Services for Payroll, Compliance, Administration and Business Process Outsourcing**



**Deborah Schneider**  
Co-Founder and CEO

**CrossFire Group LLC**  
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**Interview conducted by:**  
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor  
CEOCFO Magazine

**“CrossFire is designed to provide career opportunities. Thousands of people depend on us on a daily basis for their livelihood; that is important and that is making a difference. That is our vision.”- Deborah Schneider**

**CEOCFO: Ms. Schneider, would you tell us the vision at CrossFire?**

**Ms. Schneider:** CrossFire is designed to provide career opportunities. Thousands of people depend on us on a daily basis for their livelihood; that is important and that is making a difference. That is our vision.

**CEOCFO: As opposed to finding people jobs?**

**Ms. Schneider:** Part of providing career opportunities is finding people jobs. We want to support both our clients as well as our contractors. We provide people with jobs and handle payroll for our clients, we provide employer of record services, we provide scholarships, and we support charities. It is all about supporting the community.

**CEOCFO: Do many of your clients take advantage of the full range of services you offer?**

**Ms. Schneider:** Most of them take advantage of a portion of our services, about 25-50%. Some use all the services that we provide, but that is a relatively small subset.

**CEOCFO: How important is being part of the community in your clients' choice of working with CrossFire?**

**Ms. Schneider:** We founded the company on was being easy to do business with. Part of that is helping the clients. CrossFire is a company that supports our clients, our community, and the employees we place. To me it is all kind of part and parcel of the same thing. I do not think clients come to us because we offer scholarships or hire us because we support particular charities, but I think that is part of who we are and part of what makes CrossFire the company that it is.

**CEOCFO: What do you understand about the process surrounding staffing that perhaps others do not?**

**Ms. Schneider:** We provide a great service to the companies for a variety of reasons. One is if they have a short-term project it is much easier and better to use a staffing company or a contract labor firm to help them with that short-term project. We can staff these positions for them and we have people on the bench that we can move from place to place. If they are looking for permanent staffing, we also offer those services. We offer a direct hire service; some companies just want to find out if a person is going to work out for them, and in those cases we offer what we call a contract-to-perm. Someone may work at a company for sixty days or six months and find out that they are working out very well and the company takes them on as a permanent employee. We provide a service in the labor industry that helps each company as well as provide the opportunity to our contractors.

**CEOCFO: Are there particular areas of focus for you?**

**Ms. Schneider:** I get this question a lot because most staffing companies have some niche that they are good at and concentrate on. I like to have a variety of niches, as it helps us sustain the business in the event of an economic

downturn, and helps support our clients better. We have an industrial division, we have office and clerical, we have high-level professional, we have engineering and manufacturing, as well as IT. The reason we do that is we think it builds a very sustainable business. It allows our clients to come to us as a one-stop-shop supporting their talent acquisition needs.

**CEOCFO: *You have a number of locations and affiliate offices, what is the business structure for CrossFire Group?***

**Ms. Schneider:** We have one main headquarters location and affiliate offices and locations in those areas which we felt were important to support our client base and/or in those areas where we feel there is potential business. It is important for everybody to support the mission and the vision of the company no matter the location in which they are working.

**CEOCFO: *How do you handle some of the challenges of having people in a variety of locations?***

**Ms. Schneider:** Much of it is through the use of technology. We have a very high use of technology and by that I mean we have numerous virtual meetings, and use technology to help ourselves and our clients. We can do business anywhere because we use the tools that are available. This allows us to travel, and to support multiple sites. We utilize webinar-type meetings that keep us connected, and we have a number of meetings every week to keep our internal staff connected. We use the technology for our interviewing, for reaching out to people, we also use text, Skype, conference calls, and Internet. Technology assists us in overseeing company progress and it also helps to distribute the CrossFire brand. This goes to being easy to do business with – we are never more than a text or call away, which is important when dealing with people and their needs.

**CEOCFO: *With so many employers and employees connecting through websites and different methods, is there a particular type of company or potential employee that might turn to CrossFire?***

**Ms. Schneider:** From a client perspective, it goes back to the fact that we are easy to do business with. When we get a contract, we do not send it off to legal and spend three months red-lining and back and forth. We conduct our business with integrity and ethics, which is very important to me. We have respect for our clients and our employees. We do things right. We provide meaningful work and help our clients. I have had clients call me and say “Here is my problem, how do I fix it, can you do it?” That has allowed us to work on problems literally all over the world, helping companies navigate some of the laws and regulations. From an employee standpoint, what we try to do is provide that meaningful work and opportunity but we want to make it such that when you are an employee at CrossFire you have some benefits. We offer a 401k, we offer referral programs and scholarships, we offer benefits right away without any waiting period, we make sure that we comply with the ACA, and that all our employees -- and this is unusual in the staffing world -- are offered a true Bronze ACA compliant plan. Many times in the staffing world, people look at variable hour employees and they only offer those plans to a portion of their employees, if they offer them at all. It has been important to me and to the company that we offer as much as we can to our employees.

**CEOCFO: *You recently announced the 2016 scholarship recipients. How do you choose?***

**Ms. Schneider:** We have a committee that we put together and the committee changes every year. That committee is made up of, three to five internal employees, who do not know any of the applicants. We do everything on a blind basis and take out any identifying information. The committee ranks and rates and sits down to discuss and determine who should get the scholarship based on the applications we have received. In addition to the committee selections, we also support students in Tanzania through an organization called Tanzacare. We have six students that we currently sponsor; these are students who would otherwise drop out and not attend secondary school due to lack of funds, inability to get to school (often students walk 2-3 hours just to attend), arranged marriages, or family pressure. We are continuing to grow this scholarship support by adding more students every year, and supporting certain schools with their needs. We have also arranged for trips to visit the schools that we support. Already one of our schools has gone from one of the worst in the country to one of the top schools. We are proud of this type of support where we can make a difference in someone's life.

**CEOCFO: *Do you look for people in different disciplines?***

**Ms. Schneider:** Almost everybody who applies for the scholarship expresses a sincere need for the scholarship. In general, we are looking to help out those who truly need the scholarship. Periodically we will pull out a particular scholarship based on need and say this person is going to get the scholarship regardless of what the committee comes up with. We have one applicant right now who is an eighth grader from the city of Detroit who received an opportunity to go to one of the charter schools but cannot afford it. I met this young man and felt that he could be served by a scholarship. We are working with his mom right now to say “How can we help?” That is one example of something where we are looking at *need* and trying to make a difference in somebody's life. For everybody else we go through the entire committee. We are analyzing how they're answering the applications, what their needs are, what they are planning on

doing with it, and how it will help them. What we have found is that we supported a large number of schools, from Cambridge and Oxford to local community colleges as well as state and private universities throughout the country. We have thirty or forty schools that we have supported, and I am proud of that.

**CEO CFO: *Would you tell us more about the managed services?***

**Ms. Schneider:** Our managed services are all part of being full-service and helping our clients with their human resources and talent acquisition needs. The goal is to assist our clients' purchasing departments. We can act as a third party administrator of human resource related services. We do everything from recruitment process outsourcing, to independent contractor compliance, to vendor management.

**CEO CFO: *What surprised you as CrossFire has grown and developed?***

**Ms. Schneider:** It still exists! It is surprising to me how many lives we touch on a daily basis, from employees and their families to our scholarship recipients to the schools that we help in Tanzania. I am amazed that what started as an idea for a company has grown to be such an important part of so many lives.

**CEO CFO: *Why choose CrossFire Group?***

**Ms. Schneider:** We do business with integrity and ethics. We offer a great service and take care of our clients and our employees. We want to make a difference.

**CEO CFO: *Final thoughts?***

**Ms. Schneider:** I would like to see that we continue to support our clients and our employees. We continue to make a difference in the world and provide opportunity.

