

Success DRIVER



Sutton rides his Harley-Davidson motorcycle along the scenic routes in Mesa, AZ, where he lives and works as a contract employee for Volt Workforce Solutions.

Design spacecraft support systems. Ride his Harley. Play golf. These are all things National Staffing Employee of the Year Tom Sutton loves to do. And, thanks to his relationship with Volt Workforce Solutions, he has the flexibility he needs to pursue them all.

By Michelle Snyder

Tom Sutton is what you would call a career staffing employee. You could also consider him to be someone who has it all figured out—having achieved that flexibility so many U.S. workers crave.

For nearly his entire professional life, Sutton has worked as a contract employee. He has accepted permanent positions over the years, but life as a contract employee keeps drawing him back in—and for two main reasons: good pay and flexibility. ➤

Photography by Paul Hubbard of AZ Photo Works.

Even when his workload gets especially demanding and his work hours are long, Sutton sincerely enjoys his job and appreciates the opportunity to make valuable contributions to his field of expertise.



Close Up With Tom Sutton

Here are some fun facts about National Staffing Employee of the Year Tom Sutton—this year’s ASA ambassador for staffing industry talent.

- Sutton’s first job was designing radiation therapy machines.
- At age 18, Sutton knew he wanted to pursue a career in mechanical design. He was drawn to its engineering aspects. “It is artsy, in a sense, as you design to make things look pleasing as well as functional,” he says.
- In his spare time, Sutton enjoys riding his Harley-Davidson motorcycle—a Softtail Custom model. He’s been riding since he was 17.
- Sutton enjoys playing golf amid the picturesque scenes in Mesa, AZ, almost as much as he enjoys a good game of chess.
- When he’s working from home, Sutton likes to listen to instrumental jazz and blues, especially when the workload gets heavy.

▲ Sutton, pictured here on the No. 8 fairway at the award-winning Las Sendas Golf Club in Mesa, AZ, likes to unwind on the golf course—especially after putting in long hours as a mechanical designer.

Sutton is a talented mechanical designer whose skills are in-demand and highly valued in the aerospace industry. In 2012, he began working with Volt Workforce Solutions, and since then he has consistently worked for a California-based client company that designs, manufactures, and launches advanced rockets and spacecraft. He is the perfect contract employee for the job, particularly given his past work experiences with Orbital Sciences Corp., Boeing, and other companies operating in the aerospace industry.

Finding Value in Flexibility

In his current assignment, Sutton focuses on launch pad infrastructure and ground support equipment for large-scale, mission-critical projects—his particular area of specialty. The workload can be demanding and, when pressing to meet deadlines, the hours are long. But Sutton can put in much of the hard work from his home office in Mesa, AZ. With a proven work ethic and a high level of trust from the client company, he’s only required to travel to California for mission-critical work that requires an on-site presence.

Just this past October, however, Sutton traveled to Washington, DC, where he was honored as the 2015 National Staffing Employee of the Year. Accompanied by his son, Erick, and surrounded by associates of Volt Workforce Solutions, Sutton joined in his own celebration as a stand-out staffing employee during the ASA annual convention, where thousands of industry professionals applauded his success.

Sutton accepted his award on stage and showed the crowd that even a mechanical designer of spacecraft support systems can have a sense of humor.

“I am very pleased and surprised by this honor,” Sutton said, “and I would like to thank the American Staffing Association for acknowledging a hard-working and productive contractor. But since that individual couldn’t be here today, you got me instead.”

Volt Workforce Solutions knows how accomplished, talented, and valued Sutton really is, which is why the company nominated him for this year’s honor. Plus, like many staffing employees, Sutton values the flexibility his assignments afford him.

According to the 2014 ASA Staffing Employee Survey, which polled nearly 12,000 temporary and contract workers:

- Nearly all (97%) say flexibility is highly important to them.
- One in five (22%) say their primary reason for choosing temporary or contract employment is the availability of flexible work arrangements.

Here’s a closer look at why Sutton is a staffing employee stand-out, and how Volt Workforce Solutions successfully engaged this highly skilled individual in rewarding work.

Recruiting for Results

It seems that behind every good staffing firm—staffing employee relationship, there's a smart and insightful recruiter. In this case, that recruiter is Volt's Joaquin Martens.

Martens and Sutton first began talking about contract opportunities with Volt while Sutton was finishing out a contract with another aerospace company. At the time, Sutton was looking for new learning opportunities and engaging projects in his field. It was up to Martens to deliver a positive experience with the staffing firm as well as work opportunities that appealed to a highly skilled and experienced mechanical designer.

Fast forward to a perfect placement for Sutton, and Martens can now reflect back on how well he and Sutton communicated about expectations and job interests. What certainly facilitated Sutton's placement, Martens says, was focusing on his specific skills and specialization in spacecraft ground support.

Martens and Sutton keep in touch on a regular basis to ensure everything continues to run smoothly between Volt, Sutton, and the client company. Sutton says his partnership with Volt and Martens has been one of the best of his professional career.

"Joaquin is serious about his job and has a good attitude," Sutton says. "He has a sense of humor and always takes care of business," which means Sutton always feels well-supported in his role as a contract employee. Volt Workforce Solutions provides the consistent follow-up that helps its staffing employees feel secure in their roles and succeed on the job.

"All of us at Volt are extremely pleased that one of our tenured field employees has been chosen as the National Staffing Employee of the Year," says Ron Kochman, chief executive officer of Volt Workforce Solutions. Kochman had the opportunity to spend time with Sutton at the award presentation in October.

"Tom's expertise has contributed to the development of impressive new technologies. We are proud to call him a Volt employee," Kochman says. "It is the dedication of individuals like Tom that make the difference for our clients."

Working Together, Enjoying the Work

Even when his workload gets especially demanding and his work hours are long, Sutton sincerely enjoys his job and appreciates the opportunity to

make valuable contributions to his field of expertise. He also enjoys the interaction with his work peers. The fact that Sutton is a contract employee has no bearing on his ability to emerge as a stand-out member of his team.

Sutton leads by example, and is considered a mentor to the client's younger employees, Martens says. And while Sutton says his peers might describe him as dedicated and detail-oriented, he also throws "goofy" into the descriptive mix. Sutton suggests that having a sense of humor is also one of his strong points. "Why be miserable at work?"

But temper his lighter side with a good dose of skillful agility, Martens says. Individuals in professions like Sutton's must be able to remain calm at strategic times in order to succeed in an environment of deadline-driven, challenging, and mission-critical work. "Tom has proven again and again that he can think on his feet," Martens says, which makes him the best fit for the job.

Sutton says the flexibility of his work has certainly contributed to his overall job satisfaction. Working remotely has had "a very positive impact on my life both professionally and personally," he says. ►

What's in Store for the Next National Staffing Employee of the Year?

Each year the National Staffing Employee of the Year receives national recognition as well as an awards package, including:

- All-expenses-paid deluxe travel and hotel accommodations for Staffing World® 2015, Oct. 27–29 at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, TN
- Cover story in *Staffing Success*, the national flagship magazine of ASA
- Press release coverage as well as coverage in the *ASA Staffing Today* newsletter
- Travel gift card
- Recognition during National Staffing Employee Week, Sept. 28–Oct. 4, 2015, which celebrates the contributions of the 3.0 million individuals employed by staffing firms every week

Learn more and read about past National Staffing Employee of the Year honorees at americanstaffing.net/NSEY.

The fact that Sutton is a contract employee has no bearing on his ability to emerge as a stand-out member of his team. Sutton leads by example, and is considered a mentor to the client's younger employees.

As a contract employee, he can enjoy a variety of professional experiences and work for several different companies if and when he chooses to do so. "I am always learning new things," Sutton says, which only adds to his already deep portfolio of knowledge and skills.

Sutton says he plans to retire sometime during the next several years. He'll likely relocate and build a house on land he purchased in Texas, where his son currently resides. Sutton has worked hard and saved well, and he plans on enjoying his golden years to the fullest. However, true to his award-win-

Who is the National Staffing Employee of the Year?

The National Staffing Employee of the Year is an outstanding temporary or contract employee who best exemplifies one or both of the industry's key messages of "bridge" and "flexibility." Learn more about how to nominate one of your firm's employees at americanstaffing.net/NSEY. **The deadline for nominations is July 1.**

ning form, he does not expect to retire altogether. "I would like to work part-time to keep the mind going and to pick up a few extra dollars," Sutton says. The opportunities are sure to be plentiful. ■

Michelle Snyder is director, public relations, for ASA. Send feedback on this article to success@americanstaffing.net. Follow ASA on Twitter @StaffingTweets.

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