

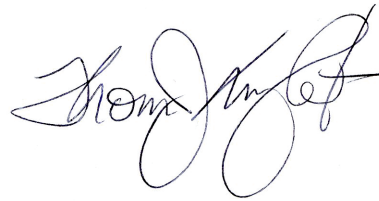
personal care services from home health aides. The company still encountered occasional resistance in a field dominated by nonprofit competitors. While this was frustrating to Mark, he used it as motivation: “We’re just going to give better service and be more responsive.” Like Kermit in *The Muppet Movie*, he saw life as being bigger than one’s own pond. Within the world of home care, BAYADA was forging a “rainbow connection,” a reference to Kermit’s song about his quest to follow his dreams.

Intensive and unorthodox interviews

Job candidates are often amazed at the length and intensity of the BAYADA hiring process. Long before the company introduced *The BAYADA Way* as a screening tool, Mark and others sought to “get the right people on the bus.” Their methods have sometimes taken potential employees by surprise.

At Kathy (Kathaleen) Reavy’s initial interview in 1980, for example, she couldn’t help but notice a novelty walnut on the president’s desk that read Head Nut. “This is going to be interesting,” she thought. She and Mark quickly discovered similar Catholic school backgrounds and large families. Their conversation went on for three hours.

Eventually Mark mentioned a job, saying in broad terms that he wanted to open and staff an office in New Jersey. Then he asked if Kathy had seen *The Muppet Movie*. She replied, “Yes, it was a nice little movie.” Mark practically jumped out of his chair, educating her on the point of the film. “I’m sitting there very wide-eyed by now,” reflects Kathy. “Finally Mark said, ‘So, you want to be a Muppet?’ I said, ‘I’ve got to get back to you.’”



ABOVE: Tom Mylet was surprised to learn that his handwritten application letter was analyzed by a graphologist. In the early years, Mark used handwriting analysis as one of several tools to assess personal and professional traits. Tom’s writing passed muster and opened the door to a long and satisfying career.

BELOW: Urged by her dad to “steer clear” of a company run by a fervent Muppet fan, Kathy Reavy took the job offer anyhow. She’s now in her fourth decade at BAYADA.



Kathy’s dad urged her to “steer clear of this kook,” but her mom said “give it a try.” After a second interview, which lasted a mere two hours, Kathy started working as a Staff Supervisor. Just three months later, she was promoted to Director of the first office in New Jersey. Today, Kathy is the Division Director of Benefits and Employee Claims and Safety.

Recently degreed as a social worker in 1982, Tom Mylet answered a newspaper ad for a Staff Supervisor (today’s Client Services Manager). It called for a résumé and a one-page, handwritten letter about the applicant’s choice of social work as a career. Tom sent both and got the job. “I was here probably three years before anyone even admitted to me that the letter was submitted for handwriting analysis,” laughs Tom, now Regional Director of Adult State Services in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Learning to listen better

Creating a culture of camaraderie helped temper the frenetic pace of a growing business and reduce the stress of work that routinely involves illness, accidents, and death. It also had the subtle effect, as David Baiada later noted, of casting a “halo effect” on relationships in the offices. People who played and laughed together built a sense of trust and friendship that got them through tough times, both personally and professionally. New colleagues were welcomed and made to feel like family.

In turn, the solid relationships helped employees listen better, a vital business skill. “When a client calls you, you’re there, fully attentive to what they’re saying,” says Mark.