

Managers Speak Out!



Laura Rock,
Head of Human Resources,
Farmers Insurance

Equal Opportunity

How is diversity part of the overall culture of Farmers Insurance?

Laura Rock

At Farmers, diversity and inclusion are of great importance. This year, we launched an Inclusion Council that has helped us create a “modern family” at Farmers, giving all employees a voice and a forum to discuss a number of topics, including how we can better serve our customers and recruit from among our growing multicultural communities. One of the key tenants we talk about at Farmers is the “Farmers Family” and as this “family” grows more diverse, we become a stronger organization. Focusing on inclusion in addition to diversity is fundamental at Farmers.

It’s also important to think of diversity as inviting

“Farmers Insurance” and “Farmers” are trade names for a group of affiliated insurers providing insurance for automobiles, homes, and small businesses and a wide range of other insurance and financial services and products. Farmers Insurance is proud to serve more than 10 million households with over 19 million individual policies, across all 50 states, through the efforts of more than 48,000 exclusive and independent agents and approximately 21,000 employees. Farmers Insurance Exchange, the largest of the three primary insurance insurers that make up Farmers Insurance, is recognized as one of the largest U.S. companies on the 2015 *Fortune* 500 list.

As head of human resources for Farmers, Laura Rock has worked with senior business leaders to craft a People Strategy aligned to the company’s overall business goals and objectives with particular focus on creating an inclusive culture, a positive employee experience, and utilizing data analytics to empower human capital decision making. She is responsible for all aspects of human resources across Farmers, including HR consulting, compensation, and benefits; talent management, engagement, and acquisition; employee relations; diversity and inclusion; and HR data & analytics.

Rock joined Farmers through the 2009 purchase of 21st Century and led the successful, six-month integration of 21st Century into Farmers. She has over 23 years of human resources experience. Prior to joining Farmers, she held HR roles at 21st Century and American General, both AIG companies, as well as Franklin Life Insurance Company.

and accepting a diversity of opinions, thought processes, and communication styles. Research shows that companies or groups that have this type of diversity come to better decisions.

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How does Farmers recruit and attract a diverse workforce?

Laura Rock

Positioning ourselves as an employer of choice for everyone, including those from diverse backgrounds, makes up a large part of our mission. Every time we have an opportunity to discuss career opportunities with candidates, whether on a college campus or at a recruitment fair, we make sure we represent Farmers as an inclusive place to work. We also instruct our external collaborators to bring us a diverse slate of candidates to be considered for a multitude of open positions at the company.

We view diversity very broadly and have a very active and successful recruitment initiative targeted towards military veterans. We have found those with military experience make fabulous agents and employees. One in four Farmers agents is a military veteran and many of our nearly 22,000 employees are military veterans, including numerous members of our leadership team.

Additionally, we recently launched a unique collaboration with Team Rubicon, integrating the skills of America's veterans into the robust disaster response efforts of Farmers. One benefit is the opening it will provide us to discuss career opportunities at Farmers with Team Rubicon volunteers.

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Please describe your company culture and why it's a great place to work.

Laura Rock

One great thing that makes Farmers a great place to work is the concept of it being a family and a group of people who care tremendously and sincerely about what we do for our customers and one another. A great example of this was our recent "Thank-A-Thon," where we called our customers across the country to simply thank them for their loyalty. This was a unique opportunity to reach customers and show them that we care.

I've worked in insurance my entire career and I've found that the people who do really well in insurance companies are those who care about taking care of others. This culture of caring connects with our customer commitment at Farmers and is evident internally, in how we, as employees treat one another and work well together. I believe that's what builds the fabric of our culture here and helps reinforce this perspective, year after year.

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What qualities and skills do you look for in a new hire?

Laura Rock

When looking at potential new hires, technical capabilities for the job are important. However, when looking for someone to join our "family," we want it to be a win for both parties. We want to find someone who is not only going to be successful in their current job, but in their next job as well, since we definitely want our people to grow with Farmers. When recruiting, we look for this type of outlook in our candidates because we're not just recruiting them for today's job, we're also interested in knowing what the candidate wants to accomplish in their career 3-5 years from now.

For me, it's about looking for someone who has the passion, the interest in growing with the organization, and the commitment to giving back.

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What is the best piece of advice you can offer to help others achieve their professional goals?

Laura Rock

Be curious. Start with being curious. Take risks. Don't be fearful. Out of every opportunity encountered, there will always be something to learn, even if it isn't discovered in a dream job. These opportunities should be embraced regularly.

It may sound cliché, but some of the best career moves I've made in my career are ones where I took a risk. The question was never why? It was, "why not do this?" A person can never go wrong with that kind of mindset during their career.

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What type of jobs are you looking to fill?

Laura Rock

Fortunately, Farmers is a big organization with opportunities in a number of areas. We have jobs for those interested in working with customers face to face, such as claims adjusters; service operations positions for those interested in talking to the customer on the phone; and technical jobs for those who like math and science.

Candidates should also know that flexibility and curiosity can open new doors of opportunity. When speaking to some of our employees who have been with us for 25 years or more, they will describe how they feel accomplished due to the variety of things they've worked on throughout their careers at Farmers, while being challenged every step of the way.

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How can our readers post their resumes online at Farmers Insurance?

Laura Rock

They can visit www.farmers.com/careers/ to find a list of current opportunities we have open, across all levels.