



UniFirst Wins 2018 Stevie Award for Customer Service

March 5, 2018

“Award-winning technology developed by UniFirst customer service representative”

OWENSBORO, Ky., March 05, 2018 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- UniFirst Corporation (NYSE:UNF), a North American leader in providing customized work uniform programs, corporate attire, and facility service products, was presented with a Silver Stevie® Award in the Best Use of Technology in Customer Service category at the 12th annual Stevie Awards for Sales and Customer Service. This is the second award in just three years UniFirst has won for customer service. The awards were presented to honorees during a gala banquet on Friday, February 23 at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, NV. More than 600 executives from the United States and several other nations attended.

Stevie Awards for Sales and Customer Service are considered the world's top honors for customer service, contact center, business development, and sales professionals. The Stevie Award group organizes several of the world's leading business award programs, including the prestigious American Business AwardsSM and International Business Awards[®].

UniFirst's centralized customer service team, located in Owensboro, KY, is responsible for answering and attending to thousands of customer email and telephone inquiries each month. UniFirst's silver-winning technology, called Ask IRIS (Informational Resources Instantaneously Supplied), was developed in-house by a UniFirst customer service representative and is a proprietary knowledge-based information management system designed specifically to improve overall customer service.

“At UniFirst, customer satisfaction is our number one priority and a key to our 82 years of success,” says Bethany Johnson, UniFirst customer service manager. “Our goal with this new technology was to measurably improve upon our call center's email and telephone customer response rates to ensure our customers are consistently getting immediate attention to all of their questions and concerns. Ask IRIS equips our customer service representatives with one-stop, instant access to important customer account information that allows us to instantly address most customer needs with just the touch of a button.”

UniFirst customer service representative Jennifer Burden developed the proprietary system herself with minimal help from the company's corporate IT department. According to Johnson, working in a busy call center gave Burden a frontline perspective of what customers really need.

“One day the idea just hit me,” says Burden. “I walked into my boss's office and asked if I could develop a system to centralize all of our customer information to cut down on the time it took to pull all the information from the many different locations on our server. She gave me the green light, so I worked with a blank platform that our IT group provided, and I wrote the rest of the program myself. And, that's how Ask IRIS was born.”

Ask IRIS has had an immediate impact on improving overall customer satisfaction. Both telephone and email response rates have increased to 99.2% since implementing the system. Call-handling times have been reduced by an average of 16 seconds, and with an incoming call volume of about 5,000 per month, this saves the team more than 21 hours of call-handling time monthly. This allows UniFirst customer service representatives the ability to provide exceptional customer service and results in thousands of satisfied customers. According to Johnson, “Our customers couldn't be happier with our team's ability to efficiently service their accounts and we're extremely proud of that.”

More than 2,500 nominations from organizations of all sizes and in virtually every industry were evaluated in this year's competition. Winners were determined by the average scores of more than 150 professionals worldwide in seven specialized judging committees.

Details about the Stevie Awards for Sales and Customer Service and the list of Stevie winners in all categories are available at www.StevieAwards.com/sales.

About UniFirst:

Headquartered in Wilmington, Mass., UniFirst Corporation (NYSE:UNF) is a North American leader in the supply and servicing of uniform and workwear programs, as well as the delivery of facility service programs. Together with its subsidiaries, the company also provides first aid and safety products, and manages specialized garment programs for the cleanroom and nuclear industries. UniFirst manufactures its own branded workwear, protective clothing, and floorcare products, and with 250 service locations, over 300,000 customer locations, and 14,000 employee Team Partners, the company outfits nearly 2 million workers each business day. For more information, contact UniFirst at 800.455.7654 or visit UniFirst.com.

CONTACT: Donna Kish, PR/Communications
Email: Donna_Kish@unifirst.com

A photo accompanying this announcement is available at <http://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/e3a56eb8-203b-4e32-92e8-ff22000edd4e>





Source: UniFirst Corporation