



# CEO

## BREAKFAST WITH PAUL SPIEGELMAN

*Chief Executive Officer, The Beryl Cos.*

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enjoy what they do every day. It's really very simple. There's no secret behind it."

We've met for a Wednesday breakfast in the club-like atmosphere of the Members Lounge of the Sports Club at the Four Seasons Resort and Club in Las Colinas. It's a cold winter morning, and we have a view of an empty expanse of golf course. Only a few scattered tables are occupied just after 7:30.

I'd arrived a few minutes late, thanks to gridlock on State Highway 183, and entered the wrong end of the building. Spiegelman met me and led the way past the weight machines and ball courts to his regular breakfast spot. He plays tennis (his "passion," outside his work and family) on the club's indoor courts four or five times a week. He's dressed casually, in jeans and an un-tucked, open-collared black shirt with white stitching. Without glancing at a menu, Spiegelman orders his muesli, while I opt for a bowl of oatmeal with slices of banana and a glass of orange juice.

The last decade has been good to Beryl, he says, with "double-digit" revenue growth each year, reaching \$33 million in 2009 with a staff of 350 employees.

A change in focus among health care companies has spurred this success, Spiegelman contends. "Hospitals are finally realizing that they're in the customer-service business. It's not just, 'If you build

it, they will come.' It used to be wherever my doctor told me, that's where I'd go. It's no longer that way."

Claiming 85 percent of the market among hospitals that choose to outsource these services, Beryl believes it has a formula for long-term growth with its employee-focused culture. Visitors to the Bedford call center see a company dedicated to keeping its staff happy. One position—with the official title "Queen of Fun and Laughter"—is devoted to maintaining company culture. A system has been set up to alert Spiegelman to write personal notes acknowledging employee anniversaries, weddings, funerals, engagements, or even when a worker's child wins a T-ball championship. It's just one of many steps Beryl takes to make every staff member feel valued.

"If you start first and foremost with generating loyalty in your employee base, that drives customer loyalty—customer loyalty drives profit," Spiegelman says.

Beryl was founded by Spiegelman and his two brothers in the mid-1980s in Southern California. In 1995, Hospital Corporation of America gave the company \$11 million to build a call center in a former Wal-Mart building in Bedford. For seven years Spiegelman commuted from L.A. to North Texas, before finally transplanting his family to Southlake in 2002. He and wife Teresa have two children.

"I'm not a religious person," says Paul Spiegelman, who nonetheless speaks with an evangelist's fervor when spreading his personal gospel of business. For much of the last hour he's neglected his bowl of berry-topped muesli. "Treating your employees right isn't just the right thing to do. It's good for business."

Spiegelman, CEO of The Beryl Cos., is in the business of helping hospitals take care of their patients. From a 24-hour call center in Bedford, Beryl provides "concierge service" for health care companies—including some insurance plans—that opt to outsource. This includes physician referrals, appointment scheduling, and checking in with patients after they're discharged.

But Spiegelman's bigger concern is caring for his own employees.

"Our company and our philosophy has really been built around this idea of employee engagement," the 51-year-old says. "We create an environment where people

He's reminded of their move east as we finish our breakfast. I've devoured a surprisingly delicious bowl of oatmeal, on which I sprinkled brown sugar. Spiegelman's muesli remains neglected, with only a few bites taken, when we stand to leave. I apologize that he didn't get to eat much, since he'd done most of the talking. "They always give too much anyway," he replies.

As we steel ourselves against the chilly air outside—he throws on a thin black leather jacket—he remarks that Los Angeles never treated him so coldly.

"Went from the beach to the pastures," Spiegelman says. "But [here I] love the culture, love the people, love the schools, and love being able to go into work every day and see my Beryl family and come home and see my real family."