David Jenkins believes in people, and this is the secret to his success.

“The most gratifying thing I’ve been a part of in business is providing opportunities for people to unlock their potential to do things they didn’t think they could do. To do great things. Business is a means of creating resources to help other people. That’s how it should be used. If you use it for other things, it’s a waste.”

Jenkins founded Conservice in 2000 to help landlords manage the cost of unlimited utilities usage and encourage tenants to be mindful of consumption. It has grown to employ nearly 2,500 people in Cache Valley and other locations and has generated an impressive savings of precious resources through a 30% reduction in utilities consumption.

Considering his contribution through Conservice, and with varying degrees of ownership in more than 70 additional business ventures, how Jenkins captures human potential is worth noting.

Listen, Learn, and Lead. Jenkins surrounds himself with people of diverse talents and perspectives, who are compatible in the business sense and work well together. “Smart people are everywhere. Surround yourself with the smartest people you can find. Really listen to what they have to teach you, learn the dynamics of how things work, and then provide the vision and prioritization to make great things happen.”

Foster Communication and Transparency. Jenkins encourages employees to work across departments to address problems and generate solutions together. He implemented an open meeting policy where anyone can attend any meeting in the company, as long as they participate in some way. The Questions for Dave program enabled employees to submit written questions on any topic to Jenkins, who personally responded to as many as 150 questions each month. “These programs helped us build a positive environment and put the responsibility for solving problems on the individual instead of the boss or the organization. The complaining, questioning, and roadblocks diminished significantly. People felt empowered, and believed they had greater ownership of their destiny.”

Hard Things Build Character. Jenkins recalls the pressure of working to make payroll during the early years of Conservice with a deep sense of gratitude. “Those were hard times, but essential to who we became as a company. We learned to be industrious and figure things out. We found ways to do things better. We appreciated what it took to keep the company going as it evolved and grew. Hard things build character, and you can see the underpinnings of that in our culture.”
Embrace Change. Jenkins was determined to provide his employees with job security during the coronavirus pandemic, and he believed they could rise to the challenge of suddenly switching to remote work. Through the tireless efforts of IT and HR teams, more than 2,000 employees were able to work full time remotely. Embracing change in unexpected circumstances has positioned Conservice to meet demand for a flexible work environment longterm. “Moving forward, people are going to demand more work from home or split schedule opportunities. The pandemic forced us to adapt quickly, and effectively laid the groundwork for us to expand the location of our workforce and reimagine how we do things.”

There’s No Such Thing as an Average Person. “Many of our business and social structures are designed around ‘average,’ but since nobody is average, standard metrics don’t fit,” observes Jenkins. Instead of standard assessment tools and numerical averaging, Conservice focuses on how each individual meets expectations. “If a person isn’t meeting expectations, we allocate more resources toward helping them be successful. This creates an individualistic approach to evaluating people where you can more fully consider their potential.”

Give Back. As a young father working full time to support his family, Jenkins felt frustrated that he couldn’t step away to do things like volunteer in his children’s schools. “There are things that are important in people’s lives, that have meaning, and one of those is helping other people. The opportunity to do that has a significant impact on a person’s wellbeing.” The Conservice Cares program pays employees for two hours of community service per month, which also generates good feelings and positively impacts the workplace. “I’ve hoped this would gain momentum through the business community. If there’s anything to be learned from Conservice, I hope it’s the ability to recognize, as a company, that we’re part of a community and we need to give back to that community. Both those who give back as well as those who receive it are blessed.”

Jenkins sold Conservice in 2020 and remains an active board member. He also sits on 20 additional boards where he continues to focus his efforts on helping others grow.

*The development of human talent trickles down from one generation to the next, lifting individuals and families too, and I’m really grateful to have a part in that. My goal is to enable people to gain a broader perspective on what they can do and where they can go in life. To help them gain confidence. Seeing this kind of impact on other people is why I’m in business. Utilities just happens to be the business where I accomplished it first, but it’s really about the people and what we can do together.*

— David Jenkins