

PHL|HP CONSULTING GROUP

Building and Sustaining High Performing Companies

NEWSLETTER, ISSUE 40 - PART 2 *A Success Story*



A Message from
Dr. Philip Levy
Founder and President

The Challenge:

Many years ago while leading my company, we were faced with a challenge similar to that being faced today by many leaders--- a shortage of capable employees to capitalize on opportunities and meet organizational objectives. We were growing incredibly fast in response to great demand and our newly established position as the leader in the field. We needed to recruit hundreds of people every year and to grow new leaders. We were constricted by what we could pay and therefore couldn't compete with other business sectors utilizing traditional methods in the marketplace for the level of employee that we wanted in order to achieve the level of excellence we desired.

Question: Where were the people that we wanted and could afford?

Action: We held a **brainstorming** with a hundred of our top employees measured by their performance, their commitment to the organization, and their optimism. We articulated the **challenge and our objectives** to the entire group and then had them break into smaller groups of ten, each with a facilitator and recorder and asked them to come up with ideas of where and how to find these people who had the desired skill set and shared our organizational values. Of course, we fed them well all day:-). Remember, my belief that "**Food is Love**". We had the recorders keep copious notes of all ideas, engaging in "free thinking" with no criticism. We broke for lunch and then formed new groups and at these groups we had the recorders present ideas and obtain feedback on which ones they liked and felt were likely to meet our stated goals. We then returned to the larger group and had each recorder and facilitator present their best idea and had everyone react.

Outcome: The people we wanted were not in NYC. They were in areas throughout the country where the economy was not as hot. They were educated and had the values we wanted. They didn't necessarily know our field, but had an interest in what we did and had relevant life experiences. And, they might like to come to the "Big Apple" and fulfill a dream of theirs which they otherwise would not be able to afford.

Challenges: Where would they live? How would they afford NYC? How would they afford to get here? How would we interview them in a cost-effective manner? (There was no Skype or Facetime).

Solution: We identified the "target areas", placed local ads, put together groups and sent some of our best staff to interview them. Wow, there were great people out there who couldn't wait to come to NYC--the NYC that they saw on television:-). We eventually leased apartments and homes near the places of work where they would

live and included this as part of their compensation. We had existing staff live with them so that they would serve as coaches helping with the transition. The existing staff benefited from this with reduced rents. We paid the staff who went out to interview on weekends extra to do this and gave them a bonus whenever a candidate completed six months. The bonus was based on the new employee's level of performance. Excellence was rewarded.

Longer Term Action: As this **National Recruitment Initiative** picked up steam and worked out the kinks, we expanded this to other English speaking countries such as Canada, England, Ireland, Israel, to name a few. We created our own **J-1 Visa Program** and treated it as an International Act of Friendship Initiative between countries, where candidates came to the USA to learn our unique skill sets that they would apply when they returned 18 months later to their country. **A Win Win!**

Yes you are right, this was at a different time and the conditions are different today, but the principles apply. **Innovate, think outside of the box, involve your staff in the process, reward the best ideas and the most committed staff, remain optimistic, act on what you can and don't complain about what you can't. There are always solutions!**

I hope that this story inspires you to lead your company to continued excellence in a challenging, but highly opportunistic time.

There are always business cycles and this one will pass. Capitalize on the opportunities that exist now and think creatively, focusing on what you can control so that you emerge victorious when your competition doesn't.

Let me know what you think and how I can help.
Best,
Phil

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.PHLCONSULTINGGROUP.COM