

Newsflash

FROM LINDA SWERLING

February 11, 2003 - With the start of a new year, many of us have set important goals for the coming months. If you need help in achieving those goals, you may want to consider hiring a consultant or using outsourcing as a solution. Read on for how to make either method a success.

CONSULTANTS AND OUTSOURCING - PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Using Outside Resources

Important signals that you may need outside help are:

- ◆ Knowledge that something is wrong - but you're not sure what isn't working
- ◆ Not having enough time to complete current workload.
- ◆ Special, short-term projects
- ◆ Limited capital
- ◆ Need to translate strategic plan into operating plan.
- ◆ Redefining the business
- ◆ New to managing a department or company

If any of these rings a bell, then explore what's available to help.

Which Should You Choose?

Consultants help you solve specific problems - both reactively and proactively. They have:

- ◆ expertise in specific areas
- ◆ in-depth industry information
- ◆ knowledge and experience that can resolve or prevent a problem
- ◆ the benefit of six-figure experience

Consultants come in all specialties and sizes, but, generally, organizations use management consultants, including specialists in human resources, marketing, organizational development, finance and accounting, and operations.

Outsourcing generally is replacing a functional area, department, or salaried employee, but can also be project-specific. Outsourcing gives you:

- ◆ Flexibility
- ◆ A short-term workforce
- ◆ More cost effective
- ◆ Trial period before commitment

Payroll and benefits management or part-time CFO and controllers are typical of the most common forms of outsourced functions.

Plan for success

No matter whether you hire consultants, outsource, or both, as owner of the responsibility, you must be the leader and manage all the activities simultaneously. To do this successfully:

- ◆ Plan to integrate pieces together to see where they will move the business
- ◆ Set objectives and deadlines and get commitment from outsourced staff and consultants to meet them
- ◆ Manage time carefully - consider your major role that of project manager

Your most important challenge is communication to maintain the team. You are the center of the circle. Outsourced employees and consultants need the interactive information only you can provide so they can see how they fit into your business as a whole

If you have goals to meet this year and want to explore using outside resources to achieve them, please feel free to contact us.

As always, Level II Solutions provides business operations for emerging, established and family-owned companies and specialized consulting for M&As, turnarounds and global expansion. Until the next News Flash . . .

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