

Turning West for News

A Publication for Friends and Clients of M. H. West & Co., Inc.

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Message from the President

M. H. West & Co., Inc. becomes seven years old on February 1, 1998. My colleagues and associates in the business community tell me that this event is clearly a milestone in the life cycle of any business! Will I celebrate this occasion? Probably not...but I am extremely grateful for eight individuals who I refer to as the "Magnificent Seven" plus "One" (a mentor) for their support of my efforts over the past seven years. They helped to reinforce my "**CAN DO**" attitude and my belief that "**THE SKY IS THE LIMIT**". When asked about factors that underlie the firm's longevity, the following immediately comes to mind:

- Entering the market place with a strong business plan, transforming the business plan into a strategic plan and using the plan to grow the business
- Offering a value added service and treating customers in the same manner that you would like to be treated
- Valuing employees as one of the most important assets of the business
- Managing resources, information and conflict
- Working hard and smart
- Developing leadership at all levels of the company
- Investing in professional and trade associations that relate to both the company's and customers' product and service line
- Remaining humble and helping others to succeed
- Building a network of businesses and individuals to assist in meeting company goals
- Leading a healthy lifestyle AND
- STOP THINKING ABOUT SUCCESS. SUCCESS IS LIKE CHANGE...IT DOES HAPPEN BUT IT TAKES TIME!

What are my plans in the eighth year of the business?...to continue following the same prescription that I have just described with emphasis on customer service, service expansion, diversity and product improvement. This issue of "Turning West for News" focuses on building a quality workforce for the 21st century. Workforce development begins with the employee interview and ends when the employer and employee agree or believe that separation from the company becomes a Win, Win for both parties.

Much happiness, good fortune and good health in 1998!

THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

(by Dr. John R. Rothermel)

FIRST OR LAST CHOICE EMPLOYER

(Attracting the Best Candidate for Available Positions)

Low, low unemployment means that 1998 will be a year when organizations will have to compete vigorously for qualified staff. Is your organization ready for that kind of competition?

Let us look at a "top of the line" candidate's first experience with your organization. Will it be an impression of a first choice or a last choice employer for the candidate?

Last choice develops when a harried receptionist seats the candidate in a remote corner of the office suite while phoning intermittently to staff to find out who is going to receive the candidate. First choice occurs when a previously informed receptionist graciously escorts the candidate over to the Interviewer's secretary within minutes of the candidate's arrival.

Last choice occurs when the second stop is in a pictureless, barren-looking internal conference room where the candidate is left to roost in isolated boredom while the secretary goes to find the interviewer. First choice, on the other hand, is when that stopping place is a bright, cheery, well-furnished conference room where the candidate is offered choice of beverages, a coat hanger and a promise of the interviewer's immediate appearance.

Last choice is when the interviewer, despite having a well-crafted resume in hand, immediately begins interrogating the candidate. First choice is when the interviewer offers the candidate a video or graphics-embellished description of the company's aspirations, its successes, its culture, and its expectations for its workforce and then seeks the candidate's perceptions of a partnership that could evolve between the two to accomplish each other's goals.

Last choice is when, the interview over, the candidate is given a quick handshake, a "thanks for coming by," and the secretary's guidance to the front door. First choice is when the interviewer walks the candidate through the premises, introducing her or him to future co-workers, noting conjunctions between what the co-workers are doing and what the candidate will do, and gently expressing the pride of the organization in its employees.

A first class experience, in short, grows out of synergy between the candidate and the organization, and the candidate's potential co-workers. A last choice experience is the failure of the organization and the candidate to connect.

DID YOU KNOW THAT? **(Words of Wisdom)**

"You must learn from the mistakes of others. You can't possibly live long enough to make them all yourself." --Sam Levison

Gaining respect and loyalty from those who work for you can result if you:

- Demonstrate the work ethic you expect from others
- Are even-handed
- Set high ethical and moral standards
- Don't grandstand
- Always keep your word
- Share the spotlight

"There are an enormous number of managers who have retired on the job." --Peter Drucker

"First-rate people hire first-rate people, second-rate people hire third-rate people." --Leo Rosten

"Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves." --Carl Jung

Resiliency...a Desirable Employee Trait

Resiliency, the ability to survive despite adversity, will be a primary factor for employee success in the 21st century. Some of the characteristics of resilient people are that they have a sense of purpose, future, or strong aspiration; they see obstacles as something that can be overcome, endured or changed; they develop a range of strategies and skills to address a situation; they have a broad range of interests and goals and they believe that hard work will pay off.

In a 1995 survey, Workforce Training and Service Needs of Virginia's Businesses: A Survey for the Commonwealth of Virginia, Virginia's employers reported that their training and development needs were not being met because they could not find the customized workforce training they desired. Additionally, firms using existing programs indicate the training they were able to find fulfilled only 65-77% of their instructional needs.

M. H. West & Co., Inc. has designed programs to increase the pool of resilient people in a company's workforce. Employees learn to become more productive, develop interpersonal skills, appreciate knowledge, achieve high standards, use technology, and develop leadership potential through courses that emphasize Decision Making, Interpersonal Skills Development, Self-Management Skill Training, Problem Solving Skills, Writing and Presentation Skills, Goal Setting and Teambuilding.

Investing in training opportunities for employees to become resilient by concentrating on their strengths and assets rather than their deficiencies should yield a good return on investment. The necessity for career resiliency, adaptability and other skills will turn us all into resilient life-long learners in the 21st century.

M. H. West & Co., Inc.'s COACH (Confidence Offers All Citizens Hope) Program is another educational product that fosters resiliency skills. It is directed towards helping people understand and believe that their lives can be different by setting goals, building their character, managing stress and enhancing image. Contact Dr. Mary Anne Knobloch to continue the dialogue about employee development, retention, and recruitment.
