Paul Deis
Organization & Recruiting Experience Summary

Summary

This background briefing is intended to summarize how I approach the issue of people in an organization and summarizes some of the work I've done in this area. Almost all of this work has been done in the context of a crisis, a real, no-kidding turnaround project, or other highly pressurized situation.

Because I long ago found that my viewpoint, capabilities and methods in this area are well off the norm, also included is a summary of my background in this area, and how I came to do the relatively unusual, challenging organization/people/recruiting projects that I have done. These are also summarized.

Background

I learned early in my career that having the right people in the right place is not just important, it is THE primary factor in determining how well the organization will do. After all, the people, and how they work together (or don't) ARE the organization.

While effective processes can enable a relatively mediocre team to produce excellent results, it is still far, far better to have really top-notch, talented people in key positions.

I also learned early on that most companies didn't seem to have a clue how to do this well. People are often promoted based on expedient factors – 'right place, right time" – or personal relationships, or the experience that "he's doing a good job" without having a real job specification to measure performance against. Worse, the recruiting process – often dominated by an overworked, under trained HR person – is almost always well short of this goal as well.

As a result of these factors, I learned how to do the following relatively well:
- Assess how an organization is set up – who is reporting to who, responsibilities and processes.
- Define clearly what the structure *should* be and how each key position *should* be defined. I use this 'perfect world' vision as a benchmark when interviewing people in an initial assessment.
- Assess how well people in current positions match up to how the organization should be.
- How to find, and on-board talented people who would lift the performance of the organization.
- How to deal with HR groups and processes that are, in some cases, just plain goofy and work in direct opposition to the goal of getting really talented people in leadership roles.
- To do this in a very compressed time-frame, typical of most crisis and turnaround projects.

While I have done short-term assignments with "real" executive recruiting firms, including major search work, I have not actually worked for an extended period doing "regular recruiting" or search work. All recruiting work has been under challenging, crisis, turnaround circumstances where we just could not wait, or where "normal processes" were already failing.

Successful Leadership Recruiting Experiences

Below are brief summaries of the significant recruiting experiences that I have performed.
Food Gift Company – As an integral part of leading this recently (late 2009) completed turnaround project for this mid-sized company, using my leadership-driven turnaround methodology, I recruited fresh leadership for these positions:

- VP Operations & Supply Chain
- Director, Supply Chain
- Manufacturing Engineer
- Inventory Manager
- IT Manager

Also as an integral part of this turnaround project, I led the restructuring of the organization, including consolidation of production from 2 facilities into one, reassigning certain people into new roles, and a major downsizing of the permanent work force. This required some of the same skills as recruiting – understanding what the new roles needed to be, determining the suitability of incumbents, reassigning existing managers and staff, or recruiting from the outside.

Kellogg Brown & Root - The largest recruiting project I have performed was a rather remarkable 20 month project for KBR's Government Operations division. Our client was the VP Procurement.

Challenges – the VP faced nearly a nearly overwhelming situation:

- **About to lose the contract** – KBR had failed initial audits; the DCAA was about to perform a full, large-scale of the project, expecting to fail KBR, which have it terminated.
- **Unbelievable ramp up rate** - from a spend of $100 mil/yr to $8 Bil/yr run rate in 18 months.
- **No pre-existing organization or preparations** – no contracts, minimal staff, left from the Kosovo work.
- **Almost no leadership or structure** – no one knew how an organization of this size (grew from 300 to about 2,000 people) should be organized, specialties needed, regions, etc.
- **Unprepared HR organization** – hiring and on-boarding processes were setup for construction trades people, not senior executive level talent. A job offer was not a firm offer, as a result.
- **Combat conditions** - civilian contractors were being attacked. About 70 KBR people were killed, from some mortar, rocket and small arms attacks.
- **Stringent government contracting & audit requirements** – 3 bids for everything, documentation – full Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) requirements, even in the combat conditions/zone.
- **Very poor living conditions** – 120+ degree weather, Iraq desert, living in tents, communal housing, or if one was lucky, a converted container. Some positions were in Afghanistan, which made Iraq look like a picnic, due to the extreme cold and very high altitudes.
- **Low Pay** – in spite of the impression from the media, the truth was that the LOGCAP contract's pay rates were low, left from the early 1990's when the program started. One could get total earnings well into 6 figures by working the 85 hr work week, though, (but no time-and-a-half pay). For 4 months straight before a day off came.

Results Achieved - In spite of these obstacles, I led what became a real team effort, including people within KBR as well as others we brought onboard from our side. Here's what was accomplished:

- Designed a structure for this super-scale supply chain project, including regional & commodity center organizations.
- Attracted over 3,500 candidates from locations all over the world (Africa, Middle East, Far East, Europe, as well as the US & Canada), using an Internet based process. Our web site ranked on page 1 of Google unpaid searches for over a year.
- Phone interviews for over 450 candidates.
- Organized in-person interviews, including travel, for 175 leading candidates.
- 140 candidates brought to "recommended for offer" stage.

- Over 100 actually hired and on-boarded.
- Early success – 1st candidates hired the 3rd week of the project; By the 4th month, we had two interview days where we brought in 24 senior level, qualified candidates, including one VERY senior man brought in from Bankok

Positions & Roles:
- Deputy VP Procurement,
- About 20 director /VP positions / people.
- Over 65 senior level subcontract management professionals; 15 to 25 years experience.
- 10-20 buyer-level positions.

Alesis Corporation – This company's crisis was one borne from rapid success. The company had grown from a startup in a garage to a $40 mil/year consumer electronics supplier with global distribution and had recently introduced a new blockbuster product that would push it to $80 mil/yr overnight.

However, the company had no managers or staff experienced in running an operation of this size, or to manage complex in-house production and a global supply chain process. So, while working on other initiatives concurrently, I mounted a full-tilt recruiting effort to attract, on-board an appropriate team and transition them into full effectiveness at this entrepreneurial company. Highlights:

- Attracted almost 1,000 candidates.
- Screened, vetted, and organized in-person interviews with the owners.
- On-boarded leaders in these positions:
    - VP Operations & Supply Chain
    - Purchasing Manager
    - Production Control Manager
    - Warehouse Manager
    - Production Line Manager – ran a high-volume, complex electronics production line with a crew of about 80 people.

Software development crisis resolution project – A friend and customer from a former company was now in charge of operations at a health insurance company. He was faced with a failed software development project to provide functional enterprise systems that had crippled the company. Actions included:

- Hostile takeover of the project from the uncooperative vendor. Included facility and network lock-outs.
- Recruit and assemble a team of technically competent professionals with real expertise in the multiple software development and network technologies required.
- Results –
    - 5 person team in place within 3 weeks, with initial people on board within a few days.
    - Had basic functionality up and running within a few weeks, enabling operations to re-start,.
    - Full functionality was made available over a series of several months.
    - Turnaround was successful. The company survived and grew 30% the following year.