



Helping Deliver the Gift that Keeps on Giving

By Laura Byrnes, APR, CPRC



Do you know who checks their list and checks it twice?

Well, in addition to that “right jolly old elf,” aka Santa, we do.

And we don’t quibble over naughty-or-niceness because, as far as we’re concerned, local businesses interested in hiring at this or any other time of year are as sweet as sugar plums.

As the economy continues to improve, we’ve seen a shift in the job market from one that was highly competitive because it was inundated with those looking for work, to one that is highly competitive because it is flush – or at least more flush – with talent.

This month, I’m going to reprise a question I asked in this space three years ago – talk about the Ghost of Christmas Past – and that is, what’s on your wish list?

Let’s be honest, a lot of what you need from your hires is hard to fit on a Letter to Santa. And to be fair, he’s pretty busy this time of year. Let us deliver if Santa is hard pressed to do so.

We certainly know that hiring talent is important. But hiring the right talent is perhaps the most important thing a business owner can do. Paraphrasing from a recent Forbes article on the subject, a bad employee can drain a company’s resources and drag people down, just as surely as Ebenezer Scrooge or the Grinch. But a good employee can be a company’s greatest asset.

That means you are looking for employees that have the professional or hard skills, the specific knowledge and abilities necessary to do the job, as well as the interpersonal or soft skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

Harley Fiorentino, a 15-year-old who attended one of our Youth Career Expos, explained the distinction by telling me that hard skills can get you the job but soft skills, such as communication, punctuality, teamwork, self-direction and conflict resolution, are what you need “in order to keep the job and to excel.”

Three years ago in writing about this, I cited a Fajob.com survey showing that, when it comes to employers wish lists, job skills top the list followed by experience and soft skills.

A quick Google search of top job skills turns up scads of similar findings, from LinkedIn’s survey of 300 hiring managers to CNBC to sites such as Top Resume and even Parade Magazine.

First thing you need to know: we can deliver for the long-term. You may recall a skills gap initiative we launched a few years back in collaboration with community partners. What we learned is that the problem wasn’t that there weren’t enough job applicants or that candidates were unskilled, just that the skills they had didn’t match those needed in the current and emerging job market. Employers told us many applicants lacked critical soft skills as well.

Working with economic, education and community partners throughout our three-county region, we created a Customized Business Training program that offsets costs of upgrading the skills of current employees; made available Computer Numeric Controlling (CNC) software and training and ramped up On-the-Job Training (OJT), Paid Adult Internship and Work Experience Trainee programs as well as offered apprenticeship, or “upskilling” initiatives, all designed to help you identify, hire and pay for new hires you train your way to meet your needs.

We launched Youth Career Expos in Marion and Citrus counties in partnership with public school systems, local governments, chambers and economic development and community partners designed to introduce tomorrow’s workforce – rising high school and middle-school students – to career and training opportunities available in our own backyard.

Sidebar: the third such Marion County expos, which will include homeschooled students, are set for Feb. 13-14, 2018 and employers interested in getting in front of these students to offer insight about your business and industry are invited to participate – at no charge. If you’re interested in benefiting from this terrific opportunity, email us at info@careersourceclm.com.

Along those lines, we spearheaded a career opportunity awareness/talent pipeline video series to educate students, their parents, school staff and others about the opportunities in manufacturing, technology, healthcare, transportation/logistics and construction – all key industries and economic drivers for our communities.

To date, we’ve produced myriad videos including 30 featuring local businesses – and will continue to add to that library. On top of that, and thanks to a generous grant from the Duke Energy Foundation, we’re highlighting programs and academies available in our public schools.

All videos are shown in our schools’ closed circuit television, at career expos and job fairs,

and promoted via our social media. CareerSource CLM underwrites the majority of the project costs, you’ll receive the video to use for your own marketing, HR or sales purposes, plus you’ll receive a customized marketing plan filled with tips on how best to leverage your video. If you are interested in learning more, give me a call at 352-291-9559.

That’s a quick recap of what we’re doing to deliver for you by helping build your future talent pipeline.

To meet your immediate needs – and believe me, we understand when you say you need to staff up, as in yesterday – we have a full menu of fee-free services to get you where you need to be. Everything from recruitment to job postings and promotions to training grants and tax credits to labor market data.

And yes, we hold large career fairs, typically in the spring and fall, but we also put on exclusive hiring events customized to individual employers. These can take place at your place, at one of our career centers or at an alternate site such as the College of Central Florida’s Ewers, Enterprise or Webber centers.

We handle the logistics, take care of venue fees, coordinate with your hiring managers, process applications and even promote the event when possible. In recent weeks, these hiring events have been held for E-One, UPS, FedEx, AutoZone, JR Plastics, Mestizo Foods, Chase, and Florida Children and Families, to name just a few. This month, we’re on tap to assist Chewy.com.

If you’re interested in setting up an exclusive hiring event or learning about any of our fee-free employer services, please contact our business development team at 352-873-7955 or 800-746-9950.

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa – or all three – we wish you a very happy/merry/jolly holiday and look forward to continuing to deliver for you in the New Year.

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