



Sightings

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INSIGHTS...IN SIGHT

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Vitameatavegamin for Referral Recruiting

by Dennis Schrag

"Tastes just like candy," Lucy says, pouring herself yet another spoonful of the alcohol-laced supplement Vitameatavegamin. She keeps swallowing the supplement in repeated rehearsals. But the harder she tries to get it right, the less success she has. She keeps rehearsing and becomes less polished with each spoonful. We all remember Episode 30 of "I Love Lucy." How could we forget?

In the growing challenge to attract quality employees, especially at the technical and professional/managerial level, many organizations keep repeating the same actions that yield too few or inappropriate candidates. They keep rehearsing and keep swallowing more Vitameatavegamin.

If your search for excellent talent is bogged down, perhaps it is time to step back and take a fresh look at

your recruitment processes. For most businesses, unfilled positions translate into unrealized revenue. How are you mining the best candidates at the lowest cost? Organizations with really effective internal referral programs claim success.

Referrals from your present employees are the best source of quality candidates. How is your referral program structured?

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Are you consistently and continuously marketing your referral program internally to your present employees? Are you using the same marketing techniques that yield results with your customers? Face-to-face contact and appeals? Direct mail? Newsletters? Posters on bulletin boards? E-mail blasts? It is not enough to simply list vacancies on your website. If your employees are not aware of the opportunities you have, how can they suggest candidates?

Evaluate your reward system. Providing a \$50 bounty for a \$100K executive makes no sense. Make it worth your employees' time and energy to suggest a candidate. Paying \$3500 or \$5000 for a superior employee is a bargain compared to months of lost productivity. Get real with your rewards. People give what they get.

Make it public and make it fun! Every time you have success in a new hire as the result of an employee referral, let everyone know. Publicize with maximum fanfare that Jamie Winters in shipping received a \$2000 bonus because she

suggested her neighbor for a key position. Make internal referring as intoxicating as Lucy's elixir.

I have an engineering client who gives away a 42" flat panel TV every quarter. How? A drawing. Every time an employee makes a bona-fide vacancy referral, the employee's name goes into the hat. It makes no difference if the referral is employed or not, the referring employee is eligible for the TV drawing. The firm aggressively markets the program internally. A four-color poster on each employee bulletin board explains the program.

The result: internal referrals have soared by 35 percent.

The best part of a strong and aggressive internal referral program is simple. You are rewarding your employees for caring about their employer. It is so much better to reward your staff than to pay a third party.

Stop swallowing the same old Vitameatavegamin if it is not working for you. Take a careful look at the best program for producing quality employment candidates . . . your internal referral program.

If you are paying a \$50 bounty for a \$100K position, there is a serious mismatch.



Get Some Sleep

That perfect proposal was completed. Ask your proposal production team. Did they spend a full week preparing it? Did it take several all-nighters to create that exceptional document? Did they have to plead and beg for the technical content? Did they invest three or four sleepless nights?

Did they trade much-needed sleep for a superior proposal? Was it a good investment?

In the October 2006 issue of Harvard Business Review Charles Czeisler, Harvard Medical School professor and consultant to many businesses, says it simply: sleep deficit is a performance killer.

Many professional service businesses continue to confuse sleeplessness with high performance. But there is no correlation. Those weeks of 80-plus hours of coffee, cola and work are counterproductive. Sleeplessness at work is a big mistake. Lack of sleep tends to result in errors and mistakes.

Czeisler's article explains the four sleep-related factors that affect cognitive performance.

#1. There is a basic human drive for sleep. The more time awake, the more the body seeks sleep. The result is the brain will force the sleep switch on. Are you drowsy? Actually your brain will force you to dose off. Errors are likely to occur. Ask a tired truck driver.

#2. The total amount of sleep needed over time is directly related to peak performance. Perhaps you got six hours of sleep one night and four hours of sleep the next. Your body and brain will still react to the rest deficit and create an impairment that is equal to legal drunkenness.

#3. There is a circadian factor. Each person has a personal clock. Unlike my dog (and most other animals), who takes frequent short naps during the day, we humans don't. The circadian factor is a force that says. . . "naps, then let's get on a personal schedule." Violate that schedule and fatigue sets in. As a result, you're so tired you can't sleep.

#4. The last factor is sleep "inertia". There is a transition time essential between the time you wake up from a deep sleep and the time you are in

peak mental ability. Usually this warm-up period can last at least 20 minutes and takes several hours for optimal mental functioning.

There are some additional issues that play into the sleep mix. People over age 40 tend to have more fragmented sleep patterns. The quality of the sleep is not as good. There are other issues like sleep apnea (cessation of breathing during sleep) or restless leg syndrome. The physiology of sleep is so critical to doing our best at work.

Turn that Blackberry off. Lay down on that expensive sleep-number mattress in a dark quiet room. Reduce the alcohol and caffeine consumption.

Add these factors together and the bottom line is clear. A good night's sleep is a great investment. We need plenty (eight hours) of sleep to perform optimally. It makes good business sense to make sure you and your performers can operate at their best. People work better, faster and more accurately when they sleep well.

Get some good zzzzzs tonight.

WHAT IS THE LONGVIEW GROUP, LLC?

Seeking more efficiency and effectiveness in your professional service business? The Longview Group, LLC provides you INSIGHTS through training, on-the-job coaching, expert counsel, and extra-hands services.



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