



## Results-Driven Solutions April 2012 Newsletter

by Sarah E. Dale and Krista S. Sheets

The ultimate success of a financial services practice means maximizing  
ROP=Return on People™



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One quarter down, three to go. What a busy first quarter it has been. We are hearing great successes from our thriving advisory teams. Referrals, organic growth, team expansion, and a focus on business optimization are consistent themes. In this newsletter, we offer some guidance to make sure that you are working on your business, not just in it.

Both Team Insights, our column designed for advisory teams, and Corporate Insights, our column designed for corporate leadership, focus on the importance of capitalizing on your greatest asset – PEOPLE.

Please feel free to share the content of this newsletter with anyone who can benefit from it. And, if there is anything that you would like for us to include in future newsletters, let us know! We base our newsletter content on your specific needs and what we hear from the field. To submit a topic that you'd like to see in upcoming newsletters, please email us at [info@ParagonResources.com](mailto:info@ParagonResources.com) or [info@knownobounds.net](mailto:info@knownobounds.net).

“Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.”

~ **RYUNOSUKE SATORO**

### Team Insights

#### People Define Your Success

Recently, we led roundtable discussions and participated on a panel at a National Conference. We were thrilled to see that, in almost all of the general and breakout sessions, the focus was the subject of PEOPLE. So often at corporate events, the focus is on the numbers and the latest technology in this industry. The numbers we seek and want to “hit” are driven by human capital. Clearly, IT can help you and your businesses increase efficiency, but it cannot replace

capital. Clearly, it can help you and your businesses increase efficiency, but it cannot replace the need for talented people who understand the true needs of your clients.

The following are notes from this conference:

- Vice President Dick Cheney was asked what the underlying factor to success was, whether in business or in government. He confidently answered, “It’s the people. Better get it right. Put together a team that can serve well.” Vice President Cheney suggested that the people you choose for your team will either accelerate your business or hinder all progress. Sometimes we make mistakes on our hires, and in those cases, we need to quickly remedy the situation. We need to be accountable for our mistakes, release the person quickly and kindly, learn from our errors, and ensure that we don’t make those same hiring missteps again. Likewise, we need to be sure to recognize and appreciate the people around us who are helping us work towards our vision and our goals.
- This theme, Hire Wisely – Fire Quickly, continued during a roundtable discussion on maximizing talent which Krista facilitated. The RIAs were all in team or staff expansion mode. Many learned the hard way that you must do proper due-diligence when selecting new employees because those quick decisions will really cost you in loss of time, productivity, and money.
- In the Business Succession Planning panel discussion, veteran advisors were asked if valuation of the business was the most critical factor in the plan. Each senior advisor and business owner agreed that, although valuation is both tricky and important, it is finding the right individual(s) to succeed you that is the hardest and most vital part of the equation. As one panelist articulated, “PEOPLE are your greatest resource in anything and everything you do.”
- In the panel discussion on building high-performance teams, in which Krista was a panelist, many of the questions revolved around HOW to expand, rather than the NEED to do it (as today, most understand the obvious need to go beyond sole proprietorship). Questions were posed on how best to source talent, how to be attractive to potential employees, aligning roles and responsibilities to the right people, understanding staff expectations of reward and recognition, and how to develop leadership strengths in others.
- Dr. Robert M. Gates, 22nd U.S. Secretary of Defense, shared his thoughts as he described himself as “Eeyore of the national security community.” Regardless of what war, what weapons, what situation, or what country, the message, albeit it rather dire, clearly reminded us again of the importance of leadership, people, and how we must be able to interact with others to achieve any goal.
- This eventful conference had underlying themes of awareness of the needs of specific demographics, such as Generation X/Y, Women, Baby Boomers, etc. The message was quite clear – you better understand all the varying types of PEOPLE in this business in order to attain and sustain success. Sarah’s roundtable discussion focused on acquiring and retaining clients in today’s competitive marketplace. If you are doing this business the same way you did it 10 years ago, you better take some time to measure the results of your efforts. We are finding that most top producers are re-evaluating EVERYTHING they are doing and getting out of their comfort zones, which is leading to an evolution of the financial professional.

People can make or break our business. So, as you hire and expand your teams, it is imperative to have a hiring process that will lead to finding the right person to fit a role and who has motivators that fit the culture you have built. Most advisors abhor the hiring process as it can be so time-consuming and can take them away from working with clients. However, there is nothing more important than surrounding yourself with the right people who will play a remarkably vital role on WHEN, and indeed WHETHER, you achieve your defined goals. Through our consulting and training services, we help advisory teams with their growth plans and offer a suggested hiring process below. If you need to reassess what is working and what

isn't in your practice, please contact us for additional support. We have several assessments, tools, and resources designed specifically for this industry.

- First, define your business model and vision. Identify your ideal practice and what you would ultimately like to achieve.
- Next, spend some time identifying and quantifying all the work (the “WHAT”) within each of your business functions.
- Third, determine the requirements for each position; what skill set, qualifications, and behaviors are needed to perform each job and what attributes will be rewarded in each position. This information will form job-specific descriptions or profiles.
- Fourth, assess your current team members' strengths and motivational attributes to understand the unique makeup of your team. If necessary, reassign positions to capitalize on your human assets.
- Fifth, expand your business by adding people to increase capacity and fill the specific gaps within your practice. Because you have a keen understanding of your practice's needs, your sourcing and selection of talent will be easier. Sound interviewing for specific needs is critical at this stage.
- Next, you will onboard new team members to ensure that you efficiently and effectively bring them into your business to maximize their time to productivity and set the stage for long-term commitment.
- Finally, you will provide the resources, technology, and systems that your people need to run the business at an optimal level which leads to long-term business SUCCESS!

Regardless of how YOU define success, building strong relationships, whether personal or professional, is a vital part of the equation. Focus on hiring and surrounding yourselves with the RIGHT people, engaging in the right activities, and utilizing today's technology, and you'll attain your numbers, your goals, and your ultimate success!

Learn more about our [People Insights](#).

Learn more about how your team should be serving your clients with our [Know Service Book](#).

Want to gain insight into your current PEOPLE, TEAM, and BUSINESS? [Performance Insights Process](#)

## Corporate Insights

### 4 Critical Leadership Questions That Demand to be Addressed

In keeping with our PEOPLE theme, over the next four editions of this newsletter, we will cover four critical questions that you should be asking yourselves as leaders.

1. What are you doing to ATTRACT top talent to your company, your team, or your department?
2. What are you doing to ensure that you ONBOARD those people in a way that makes them feel welcomed, delivers on recruiting promises with actual experiences, and accelerates their time to productivity?
3. What are you doing to ensure that your “employees” are delivering the ultimate experience to the other critical people in the business – the CLIENTS?
4. What are you doing to RETAIN top talent?

This edition will focus on that first question, **“What are you doing to ATTRACT top talent to your company, your team, or your department?”**

As leaders, more than likely you have experienced what it is like to hire the “wrong” person for a job. This is often the result of one of the following issues:

- Lack of due diligence in defining the actual work that needs to be performed
- Utilizing an old job description that no longer fits a role
- Inadequate interviewing by shortchanging the interview and by only having one person conduct it
- Forgetting the importance of culture and chemistry and only focusing on qualifications or experience
- Not utilizing objective assessment tools to help really understand the candidate – who they are, what their strengths are, what makes them tick, and their natural inclination for a position
- Hasty decision making due to desperation
- Being unrealistic in what the job is and not delivering on expectations set

Whether you are looking to recruit sales people (financial advisors) or attract support people, the factors listed above will lead to wasted time, energy, and resources for both you – leadership – and your recruit. As you work through this information, consider it both from the standpoint of your own hires internally and the support that you provide the field in expanding their teams.

One of the most frequently made mistakes in the human capital hiring process is neglecting to define the ACTUAL WORK that needs to be done first. Antiquated or standard job descriptions do NOT lead to identifying the right person. Generic job descriptions are often too vague and void of details, which leads to ambiguity. You must understand all of the WORK to be done in your business (the WHAT) prior to bringing on the actual people to perform that work (the WHO). You need to look at every detail of your business so that you are acutely aware of what it really takes to optimally run your company and the subsequent human capital to achieve that goal. You must also understand the chemistry in the current team or within the department. Getting someone to fit a role is half the battle. Getting them to fit in with the established organization can be extremely complicated. A person who doesn't see the world as the others do can annihilate the current chemistry that the team or department shares. Although not the only resource, you should utilize objective assessment tools such as our [People Insights](#) to help make the right choice for the job and the current team.

Below we provide a brief list of items that you, the leadership team, should consider as it relates to attracting the right PEOPLE to your company:

- **Company Analysis:** Consider and answer the following questions: Who are we really? How are we known in the community? What is our brand? Who will resonate with this brand? What are our critical selling points? What is our story? What is our unique value proposition? What type of person will thrive in the environment and culture that we have created? How do we define our ideal candidate(s)?
- **Workload Analysis:** Considering the [FIND-GRIND-MIND™ model](#), what is the actual work that must be executed? What gaps do we have in the current workload? Is the work technical, relationship-oriented, administrative, or sales-related?
- **Creating the Job Description:** By identifying the specific activities that the individual will be required to execute in the workload analysis, you can establish both a functional job overview as well as a more detailed description of responsibilities. This will lead to success in the position needed within each function of your business. Committing the responsibilities that you have identified to writing will provide the foundation for a specific job description. Adding in the essential qualities and attributes for success in that position, along with any educational requirements and the compensation for the role, will help you complete a job description that will lead to finding the RIGHT person. Obviously, you can then add in the full benefits that your firm will offer the individual. This may include vacation time, sick time, health/dental/life insurance, retirement, etc.

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- **People Analysis:** Consider and answer the following questions: Do we have anyone currently on the team who has the right talent and skills to take this role? Based on the work defined, are we looking for someone who will predominantly be FINDING, GRINDING or MINDING? Do we need a sales person, a technical person, an administrative person, a relationship person, etc.?
- **Sourcing Talent:** Whether through recruiters, print, or online resources, be sure that as you source your talent, expectations are clear so that you minimize the non-qualified candidates. Ensure that multiple people are included in the interviewing process and that questions are not just related to skills or experience. Attitude is critical. For most positions, you can train for the skill set, but attitude is part of a human's DNA and is unlikely to change.
- **Utilize Assessment Tools:** As you narrow down the candidates, utilize assessment tools to clarify and make the final selection to ensure that you are aligning roles, responsibilities, and culture.
- **Make Offer:** In making the offer to the selected candidate, again be sure to address their concerns and review the responsibilities, the expectations, the benefits, and so on. Even if you have decided that this is the right person for you, the candidate may not feel the same way. In order to have long-term loyal recruits, it must be mutually beneficial.
- **Move to Onboarding Process:** We will address this element of the human capital selection process in our next newsletter.

Within our industry, in both the field and home office environments, we often see teams where EVERYONE has to wear multiple hats. Structuring your business this way leads to inefficiency, unnecessary stress, and limits the growth of the business and its ability to reach its potential. Clearly defining each person's roles and responsibilities, and then matching the right person to those roles is critical to the success of your company. Bottom line...finding and then supporting the right people in your organization is fundamental to your long-term success. It is better to take the time to hire the right fit for both the job and your business than it is to accelerate the process only to find yourself reliving the same challenges just a few months down the road!

### **Practice Management Expertise**

Are you a firm leader who is interested in further developing your practice management offerings? We provide corporate consulting, train-the-trainer, and program content based on our People + Process = Performance™ and our FIND • GRIND • MIND™ Model for Financial Professionals. Please contact Krista Sheets at 770.319.0310 or Sarah Dale at 757.258.0008 to discuss your specific needs.

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If you have any comments or suggestions on how we can better assist you and your practice, please know that we welcome your input. If you are looking for assistance on a specific project, please feel free to contact us so that we can craft the best solution for you using our own expertise or that of our strategic partners.

Warmest regards,

Krista & Sarah

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